



The fairest forms of Nature show
Her Life was like y^e Morning
That withers in its Bloom

M. 12510. 20. 25
LETTERS

OF THE

Marchionefs de M***.

'Translated from the Original *French*, of the
Celebrated Mr. CREBILLON.

" If any LETTERS may be ranked with the celebrated
" ones of Abeldard and Eloifa ; They are 'These of the
" Marchionefs de M—. They have the Fire, the 'Turn,
" the Spirit, the easy Air of those we have mention'd:
" They furnish us besides with this useful Lesson, That
" Guilty Love must expect to meet with unhappy
" Consequences." *Journ. Liter.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for L. DAVIS and C. REYMERS,
opposite Gray's Inn, Holborn, 1758.

[REDACTED]

LETTERS

OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY

OF LONDON



LONDON

Printed by J. G. & J. H. Smith, 15, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

1881

LETTERS

FROM

The Marchionefs de *M****,

TO

The Count de *R****.

*An Extract of a LETTER from Madam
d*** to M. de ***.*

I HAVE lately made a very agreeable
Discovery ; for I found, among the Pa-
pers that belonged to the Count of *R***,
a Collection of Letters written by the Mar-
chionefs of *M****, and was charmed to
see the only Remains of a Person illustrious
by her Birth, and equally celebrated for her
Wit and Beauty. I have read them with
a peculiar Delight, and they may possibly
prove as entertaining to you. For my part,
I should not be displeased, if they were
B commu-

communicated to the Publick. Perhaps, they may not present you with that Accuracy of Style, in which our Writers place so considerable a Part of their Merit ; but the little Negligences of a Woman of Wit have that amiable Air, which might be difficult, even for your fine Genius to imitate : However, if they are accommodated to your Taste, I shall not despair of their Success. I must confess indeed, it would have been very satisfactory to me to have discovered more Traces of Virtue in these Letters ; but the Marchioness was in Love : This was the original Misfortune, and all the rest are, in some measure, the inevitable Consequences of such a Cause. I am sensible, that a distant Lover seems to make no dangerous Appearance, and we imagine our Virtue very safe in his Conversation ; but the Aspect of Things is changed, in proportion to his Approach, and those Persons must be unacquainted with the Disposition of the Heart, who believe it incapable of Weakness. I could amuse you with several Particulars on this Subject ; but I am a Woman, and you may possibly suspect that I am not entirely disinterested in my Observations : But let us return to the Letters. I have only transmitted those to you, which I imagined worthy to be read ; and tho' I have selected no more than seventy,

ty,

ty, out of five hundred which are in my Possession, you are not to conclude that the rest are inferior to these ; but Lovers frequently write things that are of small importance to any but themselves. I may likewise add, that I found my self a little disgusted at the excessive Warmth that glows in some of these Letters, and it seem'd, to me, ridiculous to indulge so much Weakness for a Man. I have likewise rejected several others, out of Regard to the strict Rules of Decency ; but, at the same time, I have endeavoured to disconcert, as little as possible, the Order in which they were written ; and yet, after all my Caution, you will sometimes find the Connection interrupted. When you are disposed to pass some Time in this place, you may then judge whether I have acted with Discretion, in not parting with the whole Collection ; and, as amiable as these amorous Epistles may appear, I am persuaded you will not condemn my Proceeding. The same Expressions are frequently repeated in them ; the same Situation of Circumstances is as often presented, and the same Object perpetually rises to the Reader's View. Little Dissatisfactions, Reconciliations, Flights of Caprice, warm Resentments and flowing Tears, Joys, Jealousies and Apprehensions, Fears, impatient Wishes and Despair, are

B 2 liberally

liberally diffused ; and tho' these Emotions are varied in the Description, yet Love is the only Cause from whence they derive their Existence and receive their Extinction ; Love still appears in this Diversity of Shapes, and the Uniformity of the Subject must infallibly be disagreeable, notwithstanding the Variety of the Sentiments ; but, to give you the compleatest Reason of all, it was my Pleasure Things should be as you find them, and now I am persuaded you believe I have justified my self in the best manner imaginable.

L E T T E R I

I AM not certain whether you remember that we have only engaged our selves in an Intercourse of Friendship ; but I have promised you mine, with a sincere Intention to be punctual ; and it would give me no little Disquietude, should your desiring what I am unable to grant, oblige me to deny you what I am in a Condition to bestow. As young as I am, you may venture to believe, that I have not been destitute of proper Instructions ; and that a Husband must certainly have given me a tolerable Idea of a Lover. My own particular Reflections, the Examples of others, and the Admonitions

monitions of some judicious Persons, have furnished me with that Knowledge which others only obtain by Experience; and I have acquired all this, without the Mortification of owing it to any Experiments of my own. I may justly affirm then, that I am well acquainted with the Disposition of Lovers, and I am dreadfully afraid you are one of that Class. You have sent me a Letter, but from what Motive, I am at a loss to determine; and I think your Friendship has supplied you with some Expressions that seem to have an Air of Love: I may possibly be deceived: But your Letter was delivered to me in a very mysterious manner: You was apprehensive lest my Husband should see it; your Thoughts were disordered when you writ it, and nothing is well expressed in it, but what I was unwilling to understand. All these Particulars are Intimations of Love, or of your Desire, at least, to make me believe you are influenced by that Passion. Why are you so solicitous to be concealed from my Husband? A long Intimacy has subsisted between you, and he could never be surpris'd at your having an Occasion to write to me: The Action is innocent in it self, and nothing but the Circumstances of your Conduct can make it criminal. But of what Importance is it to me, after all, whether

you are in Love or not, if I am persuaded I shall never be sensible of that Passion for you? However, since I know how desirous you are to receive some Consolation, after the Inconstancy of Lady H***, I extremely regret my Incapacity of contributing to your Relief, and am very sensible how much I am honoured by your Choice of me, to reinstate her in your Heart. But can it enter into your Thoughts, that I should imagine my Happiness consists in a perpetual Fidelity to you? I am too diffident of my self, ever to entertain such a Sentiment, and should have reason to be apprehensive, that since you have experienced the Inconstancy of one Woman, you would never enter into any Engagements with another, but with an Intention to gratify your Revenge. The Language of this Suspicion is, that I should think my self obliged to frustrate your Design; and indeed I foresee, that our Engagements would be attended with no extraordinary Opinion of each other's Integrity. Besides, I never shall persuade my self, that Constancy can be so generous a Pleasure as to afford us a Recompence for all the other Gratifications it debars us from enjoying. The Truth of it is, you Men are very unreasonable; you expect our Hearts should be inaccessible to all but
your

your selves, and think a Moment's Attention to another Object, a great Indignity to your own Merit : You are such tender, faithful Creatures, that it is no Wonder you should be so desirous of ingrossing all the Thoughts of a Woman. For my part, I am conscious of my Inability to form such deep Reflections ; and fear I should never habituate my self to that Refinement of Thought, as to pay all the Regard to your Merit as might be justly due. You will find me very inconsiderate and such an eternal Trifler, that it would be impossible for you to love me long, and perhaps I might be weak enough to be afflicted at your Indifference. It is possible too, that Love might deprive me of my natural Gaiety of Mind ; for, it seems, a melancholy Cast of Thought is most consistent with the Dignity of that Passion ; at least you open your Part in it with a very lamentable Air, and I should be obliged to assume your Mien. One may dispense with much Fondness for a Husband, but a Lover makes it a very grave Affair ; one must conform to every Article of his Caprice ; appear disquieted when he is disposed to be so ; never smile without his Permission, nor presume to cast a Glance on any Person but himself : But I must acquaint you beforehand, that I am very apt to make Use of my Eyes, have several

ral little Fancies, am a mortal Enemy to
 Constraint, and am allowed, by my Hus-
 band, to indulge my self in as much Li-
 berty as I desire. This last Article is very
 disagreeable to a Lover, and he can never
 bear that Disposition to Artifice and Curio-
 sity, which Restraint naturally inspires.
 You see my Arguments are very strong
 against yours; but I had no Occasion to
 draw them out to such a Length; two
 Words would have been as significant as
 all I have written. And it would have
 cost me nothing to say, *I am resolved not to
 love*; and indeed this is the only Answer I
 ought to have returned to your Letter: But
 I happened to have nothing to do when I
 received it, and was therefore willing to
 amuse my self with writing to you. Adieu,
 my Lord; I shall not be at the Opera this
 Evening, I am indisposed, and keep my
 Chamber; from whence you may conclude,
 I have no Inclination to see Company;
 and indeed, Solitude seems so agreeable to
 me, at present, that I am not certain when
 I shall have any Curiosity to appear in Pub-
 lick. I confess, Absence must needs be a
 very severe Punishment to a Heart so much
 inflamed as yours. But if I did not begin
 with some Instances of Cruelty, the first
 Part of our Intercourse would be too lan-
 guishing. But I remember, in good Time,
 that

that you intreated me to let you know if you might be permitted to hope. I have consulted my Heart, on this Occasion, and am of Opinion, you must not.

L E T T E R II.

YES, my Lord, my Husband is an unworthy perfidious Man; I freely acknowledge it, and no one can enter into the Intention of your Reasonings better than my self. I ought to avenge my Wrongs; but I happen not to be of an implacable Disposition, and can assure you that I have not the least Need of any Consolation. I generously forgive my Ingrate all his licentious Conduct; and if I suffer any Disatisfaction, it is because you interest your self so much in what relates to me. You are too much afflicted at the Misfortunes of others, and I sincerely pity you if you are as much chagrin'd at the Calamities of your other Friends, as you seem to be at mine. I say mine, to oblige you; because you are positive in your Opinion, that I am afflicted; and you conclude from thence, that I cannot alleviate my Grief better, than by imparting to my Husband, the same Inquietudes he gives me. But I must inform you, that I am perfectly acquainted with his Disposition:

position: He is a Philosopher, and never suffers himself to be discomposed at any thing; and tho' I should rack my Invention to punish him, I should still have the Mortification to find him insensible of my Severity. Some Tempers are so perverse, that it is impossible to rectify them, and his is one of that Complexion; for which reason, I think it most prudent to let him pursue his Indiscretions; Time and a few sedate Reflections will restore him to me, sooner than we imagine. Life has some Moments of Inactivity, which must, unavoidably, be devoted to a Wife. Poor Man! I should really pity him, were he constantly disposed to please me, and had no other Recompence for that kind Intention, than such an inconsiderable Toy as conjugal Affection; and indeed I have not the Injustice to require so much Complacency from him. You may possibly impute this Indifference of mine for my Husband, to some secret Inclinations in Favour of another Object; but you will certainly be deceived, for he has given me a Disgust to all your Sex. They are not altogether my Aversion, however; but their Follies contribute to my Amusement; and if it were not for those which you discover, in loving me against my Inclinations, you would not divert me so much as you do at present. I must

must intreat you not to be displeased at what I say ; for you ought to consider that it is a glorious Affair to amuse the Person one loves. As to other Particulars, I am extremely concerned, that a Gentleman of your Merit should lavish, upon such an ungrateful Person as my self, that Time, which a Number of Women of my Acquaintance would undoubtedly employ much more agreeably. You will find a thousand Ladies, who are at a Loss how to bestow their Hours, and would be charmed with your Person ; for tho' I cannot prevail upon my self to love you, I am not so stupid, as to be insensible of your Merit ; and if I had nothing else to engage my Attention, I should not be displeas'd to hear you sigh for me. But my Weakness is very singular in its kind ; my Husband amuses me ; and when he has neither Time nor Opportunity to accomplish any perfidious Action, he acquaints me with those he formerly committed, and sketches out such as he flatters himself he may be able to favour me with hereafter. This is more entertaining to me, than all the engaging Speeches you Lovers can possibly premeditate. But lest I should forget the principal Intention of your Letter, I must observe, that you imagine I am displeased with you, tho' I am not able to guess what should create that Suspicion in
your

your Mind: I have not the least Reason to wish any thing to your Disadvantage; you are a Gentleman of Merit and Politeness, and apt to be a little ensnaring, if one is not constantly upon one's Guard. You entertain me with a thousand Pleasantries, which divert me extremely, when the Novelty of them prevents me from falling asleep. Were it not for you, I should never be certain that I was in Possession of any Beauty; for all the Glimpse I ever had of it, was in the Eyes of my Sister-in law, who is always out of Temper when she sees me: But that Circumstance, alone, would not be sufficient to convince me of my Charms; and I fancy that, in such a Case, a Man of your Penetration is a much better Testimonial in my Favour, than the Jealousy of a Woman. You see, by this Confession of my Obligations to you, how ambitious I am to be grateful. Adieu, my Lord; no one but your self would desire any other Proof of such a Disposition, than the Pains I take in writing to you, but you are extremely difficult to be pleased. I have some Inclination to acquaint you, that I shall visit Lady * * * this Evening, and lay my Commands upon you to be there. You ought to be very well satisfied with me now. Bless me! an Affignation!

L E T.

L E T T E R III.

TH E Jealousy you have lately entertained of my Husband, seems, to me, very singular, and I am extremely delighted with a Lover of such a peculiar Turn of Mind. He embraced me Yesterday, in your Presence; I said a thousand tender Things to him, and gave him many endearing Proofs of the most ardent Passion: You even heard me sigh; but I am surprised that a single Sigh should put your Imagination to the Expence of so many Conjectures. I can't possibly conceive how you could find any Ambiguity in it, and yet it has proved very injurious to your Repose. You charge me with practising the most dangerous Coquetry in the World, and declare that I am such a Proficient in it, as to love my Husband. I could be glad to know the Motive that inspires you with these extraordinary Speeches, and what Prerogative you have to utter them. Your Displeasure is not only pointed against the Marquis, but I am informed that R*** has entirely forfeited your Esteem, because he has addressed some Verses to me, of his own composing, and they may possibly be better than those that were presented to me by your Muse. But let me desire you to

C

imagine

imagine your self in my Situation : Is it
 any Fault of mine, if he has an Inclination
 to call me *Celimene* ? You tax me with In-
 gratitude ; but I am really perplexed to
 know what Instance of it you ever re-
 ceived from me. Is it because you tell me
 I am amiable, and that my Reply happens
 not to be agreeable to your Expectations ?
 But is not the Pleasure you enjoy, when
 you repeat such fine Things to me, a suffi-
 cient Recompence for your Trouble in in-
 venting them ? Were I to be captivated
 with every one who amuses me with such
 little Sallies of Fancy, you would soon be-
 gin to think me too grateful. Ought you
 not to be satisfied with my Indulgence, in
 permitting you to say those Things to me,
 which I would never hear from any but your
 self ; and are there no Acknowledgments
 due to me for conquering those Scruples that
 would dissuade me from writing to you ?
 Do you believe it can be consistent with my
 Duty, to correspond with you in this Man-
 ner ? For tho' my Intentions are unblame-
 able, they would receive a very different
 Construction from the World ; and who
 could I justly reproach for giving an unfa-
 vourable Turn to my Proceeding ? You are
 pleased to say, you love me ; you take the Li-
 berty to write to me, and I enter into an In-
 tercourse of Letters with you, which, as in-
 nocent

nocent as it may be on my part, and as irreproachable as I may be inclined to think it, and hope it will prove in the Event, may yet be imputed to me as a Crime. This Consideration casts a Damp upon my Mind, and I think we ought to discontinue this trifling Correspondence, since it exposes me to a Number of Inquietudes. Resume the Friend, if that be possible, and no longer persist in your Resolution to be my Lover. Direct your Addresses to some Lady, who is better acquainted, than my self, with the Value of such a Heart as your's ; I believe it to be extremely constant, and very capable of a respectful Perseverance. These are charming Qualities, but alas ! I can't tell what to do with them. Were I to lose nothing but the Tranquillity of my Soul, it would give me an exquisite Pleasure to contribute to your Happiness ; but you are too generous to desire any Concessions from me, that would cost me so dear. Let me intreat you, then, for the sake of your own Repose and mine, to endeavour to refine your Heart from this unavailing Passion. I have seen you sensibly afflicted at my Indifference, and I believe I sincerely pitied you. I am unwilling to familiarize my Breast to those Emotions ; my Duty, and even my Inclinations oblige me, to discountenance your Addresses. You must pardon

me therefore, if I determine not to receive any of your future Letters, or, at least, I must have your Permission to impart them to my Husband. You may love me as much as you please, but I shall be careful not to observe it ; for should I once suffer your Pretensions to disquiet me, I am apprehensive that I should, in some measure, interest my self in what I ought to disclaim ; but this is a Weakness equally inconsistent with my Duty and Inclinations.

L E T T E R IV.

YOU injure me in believing I was at home Yesterday, when you intended me a Visit, and that I had private Reasons not to see Company. Had I, really, shut my self up in my own Appartment, and, as you are pleased to suppose, with a Man I love, I can't conceive that I am obliged to give you any Account of my Sentiments, or that you have a Privilege to demand any Explanations of my Conduct. It is not for me to determine, whether your Unhappiness proceeds from the Insensibility that is interwoven in my Nature, or from the Prepossession of my Heart, in favour of another. The only Particular that I can assure you of, with any Certainty, is,

is, that I neither love you at present, nor ever shall for the future. The Chevalier N* * * whom your Jealousy has selected for its Object, has as little a Share of my Favours as your self; and your own Conscience can inform you, whether you have any Reason to boast of the Treatment you have received from me. My Indifference to that Gentleman does not proceed from his want of Merit, but he never entertained me, perhaps, with an agreeable Declaration of Love, and he, very possibly, never had any such Intention. These two Circumstances are at your Service, and you may choose that which appears to you most accommodated to your Relief. As to any other Particulars, I am not surprised at your believing me to be in private, yesterday, with an imaginary Rival, since you find it more commodious to think worse of me, than you do of your self. I am willing, however, to grant you all the Justice you merit; you are one of the most amiable Men in the World; it is some time, since you first gave me to understand that you loved me, and yet your Affiduities make no Impression upon me; you must certainly have Reason on your Side; my Insensibility is unnatural, and if I had not been prepossess'd with a strong Passion for some other Object, I could not

have so long retarded your Conquest of my Heart. But it very fortunately happens, that the Chevalier and I are not extremely constant, your Charms will soon supplant him ; and it would be very surprising that your Sighs should be unavailing, when such an Effect is so injurious to your Merit. It has been usual with you to receive the first Advances ; but you have condescended to pay me that Compliment, and have relieved me from the Confusion of making any Overtures inconsistent with the Delicacy of our Sex: You have found me a little remiss in praising the Lustre and Vivacity of your Eyes, and have vouchsafed to acquaint me that mine were not disagreeable. You have renounced, for my sake, all those Beauties who were interested in your Affection ; and is it possible that such a singular Instance of your Attachment to me should want suitable Acknowledgments? But why should I reinstate you in your Hopes? You are but too sensible that all my Coldness is affected, my Intentions are only to be convinced of the reality of your Ardours, and to render your Victory more agreeable by a little Resistance. I seem to be more insensible of Conviction than the generality of my Sex ; but, with all my Precautions against you, I shall find myself as much deceived as they. You ought
to

to be transported at this Declaration ; it is a perfect Novelty to you, and I am persuaded it will render me more amiable in your Imagination. Those who are addicted to Inconstancy would be too unfortunate if all Women resembled one another ; but you must not think I express my self in this manner, because I believe you incapable of a sincere Passion ; I am not disposed to reproach you in any Instance whatever, and am really persuaded that, if several of my Sex complain of your Inconstancy, they are more to blame than your self : You was led into Engagements with them more from their Choice than your own, and they crowded their Favours upon you with so much Precipitation, that you had not a sufficient Time to be amorous ; and I am not surpris'd at your Indifference. You see, my Lord, that I exceed you in Generosity ; you charge me with indulging a Passion for the Chevalier, and I justify you against the ridiculous Reports that are propagated to your Disadvantage : Can you expostulate with me for my Insensibility, after this, and is it possible for me to convince you how much I love you, by a more effectual Proof, than my believing you so worthy to be loved ? Let me conjure you, then, not to be apprehensive that, when Chance shall bring us together, I shall have
any.

any Disinclination to offer you the clearest Evidence of my Sentiments in your Favour.

L E T T E R V.

I DID not imagine, that I should still have a Disposition to write to you, and always with a disobliging Air, when, by changing your Conduct towards me, you might easily be convinced, that if I am insensible of Love, I am, at least, very tender in my Friendship. What do you expect from me, and what Hopes can you justly entertain? Can I listen to your Sighs, in my present Condition, without a manifest Violation of my Duty? It is true, I was unable to guard my self, yesterday, against a tender Moment; but can you believe I will suffer it to prevail over my better Reflections, and am I obliged to approve your Passion, because I pity your Inquietudes? But what Reason have I to suppose, that you sustain any on my Account? Am I to credit your Protestations? And, if I should prevail upon my self to be so credulous, can I be certain, that you will love me always? Would not the same Caprice of Imagination, which, at present, renders me the Object of your Vows, trans-

fer

fer them, in a short time, to another? But granting that I am not inclined to suspect you capable of Perjury, and am as little disposed to fortify my self against you for the future; is it possible for me, when I consider my present Situation, to resign my self to the Impressions, with which you would inspire me? As I am under the Restraint of the most sacred Obligations, can I permit my Heart to give any Admission to those Desires, which I am prohibited to entertain; and is that Heart any longer at my disposal? Could I really resign it to you, I should but offer you a transient Felicity, which, at present, you only desire, because you are not in Possession of any Part of it; and this would open to me an eternal Source of Tears and Torments. But were it possible for your Love to constitute my Happiness, it would prove a Happiness for which I should perpetually reproach my self, and which is ever surrounded with Disquietude and Remorse. Your Passion would soon be extinguished, and I should have nothing left but the shameful Remembrance, that I had suffered my self to be seduced, and perhaps the unhappy Consciousness that I still continued to love you. At present indeed, you only desire my Heart; but when you have once obtained it, you will insensibly lead me from Frailty to Frailty,
and,

and, at last, render me the Object of my own Aversion, as well as yours. I am not happy, but I enjoy Tranquillity ; and it has cost me dear : I have been in possession of it but a short time, and am too sensible of its Charms, to have any Inclination to expose my self to the Danger of losing them for ever.

You may boast of Love and its Delights as much as you please ; but you will find it impossible to make me a Convert to such Sentiments. I have frequently consulted my Heart, with respect to those Joys the softest Union can bestow, and they appear, to me, to consist in a mutual Confidence, an untainted Friendship and a perpetual Sollicitude to please : But alas ! these are Refinements of Love, that only subsist in the Imagination, and had never any real Existence. That Passion, as it is now conducted, is no more than a frail Intercourse formed by Caprice ; cherished awhile, by a Cast of Mind, still more contemptible ; and, at last, extinguished by both. You may, possibly, be sincere, but your Pretensions to that Character must be confirmed by my Experience ; and this, perhaps, would effectually convince me, that I was fatally deceived. You see I express my self with Calmness and Moderation, and I am under no Necessity of affecting so much

Compo-

Composure. I have sincerely acquainted you with what I think, and you ought to be persuaded, that I neither love you at present, nor ever shall; and my Heart confirms me in this Resolution, much more than my Reason. Adieu; I promised you a disobliging Letter, and am sorry that I am compelled to be punctual. Be so good, for the future, as to leave me to the Enjoyment of my Repose, and cease your obstinate Invasion of a Heart, which Duty as well as Inclination have fortified against your warmest Ardours. May you be happier in another Passion, and - - - - once more Adieu; I detain you too long, since I have so little to say.

B I L L E T.

I am either very unfortunate, or you are extremely happy, at my having sometimes an Occasion for you, and being constantly obliged to write to you in this Manner. The Affair indeed does not deserve the Trouble I give my self; but my People are so very dull, and deliver Messages with such an ill Grace, that I find it necessary for me to write for the least Trifle. You may easily imagine how much this amuses me, who, as you are sensible, am one of the most indolent Persons in the World. This Preliminary being settled, I
am

am now to acquaint you, without any Compliment, that I am obliged to be abroad, to day, upon an Affair of the greatest Importance : My Husband has thought fit to refuse me his Company, and I happen'd to imagine, at that instant, that you would treat me with more Politeness. Lady * * *, and St. Far * * *, took so much Pains to persuade me, that you had Leisure and Gallantry enough to afford me this little Satisfaction, that I was willing to be obliged to you for it. Your Uncle, the Governour, who is much more gouty and unintelligible in his Stammering than usual, was pleased to offer me his Hand ; but he is too disagreeable to give me any Pleasure in his Civilities ; and I should likewise be not a little afraid, lest he should drag me after him, in one of those Falls, that are so familiar to him ; and surely, when one chooses a Gentleman, he ought at least to be able to speak, and be steady enough to support us as we walk. Besides, he is one of my professed Admirers ; and tho' I could make the same Objection against you, yet I am advised by all my Friends to give you the Preference. Prepare your self, then, to wait upon me immediately ; but I must desire you not to be amorous. No Sighs, or disconsolate Airs, for they will but embarrass you. However, upon second Thoughts, I must allow you some Amusement : You may put on a few Language,

guors, if you are so disposed, and I give you leave to entertain all the seducing Reflections that can occur to you from such a Favour as my permitting you to attend me ; and, indeed, the Marquis has so provoked me, that I hardly know what I ought to refuse you.

LETTER VI.

CAN you be so inconsiderate as not to know, that your Obstinacy will, at last, be very displeasing to me, and that we shall infallibly break off all Correspondence for the future? What Methods must be taken to prevent you from intruding upon one's Repose? Was I not sufficiently liberal of my Severities to you last Night ; and might I not reasonably conclude, that such a Proof of my Disposition would induce you to change your Conduct? But it seems I am deceived : Sighs and languishing Glances are my Evening's Entertainment, and tender Letters are presented to me for my Amusement in the Morning. But, in reality, I begin to be weary of these unpleasing Repetitions, and were I not very cautious of giving my *Swiss* any Opportunity to make improper Reflections, I should order him not to admit your *Vale*

D

de

de Chambre into the House. I am quite fatiated with always reading the same things, and having nothing new to answer. Were my Heart interested in any of these Particulars, they might amuse me in a more engaging Manner ; but it is extremely disagreeable to be told, every Moment, that one is beloved, and yet find one's self as insensible as ever. Our Engagement extended only to Friendship, and you promised to request nothing more from me ; you even assured me, that you would not write to me for the future, and yet the Moment I waked, I was told that *Dupré* had been waiting two Hours, and brought me a Letter from the Count. I am not displeased at your Violation of your Promise, since it furnishes me with sufficient Reasons to disregard mine. I have passed the Night in serious Reflections on the mutual Friendship we have promised to each other ; but it seems to me very dangerous for a Woman to have so intimate a Friend ; and I begin to be sensible, that this Name was only chosen to countenance a Declaration of Love. I likewise found, that I had Reason to be apprehensive of that Confidence we repose in the Person we esteem. A Woman easily habituates herself to unfold her Heart without Reserve ; the Friend never fails to improve those Conjunctures, and very

very gravely takes upon him to be our Lover, when we little imagined he had any such Intention. I am not disposed to be surpris'd in this manner. Your first Endeavours have tended to inspire me with something more lively than Friendship; and yours had always too tender an Air, to be entitled to that Name. I might be justly charged with Indiscretion, should I permit you to be my Friend any longer; and yet I am unwilling to consider you with Indifference: Can I think of no Medium then, that would relieve me from my Perplexities? I positively declare against Lovers; they give us abundance of Trouble, when we are insensible of their Passion, and grow dissatisfied themselves when they are convinced we love them. I have given you my Thoughts on Friendship; and as to Indifference, I really think it the most disagreeable Situation of the Mind. You see, my Lord, how much you embarrass me: Let us forbear to talk of any thing, I intreat you, till I can give you some fixt State in my Heart. I am going to think of it, and if I can determine on nothing better, we must resolve to continue as we are. Adieu — I would not have you give your self the Trouble of paying me a Visit this Afternoon. I have engaged my self with Lady ***. She has had

some little Disagreement with *St. Far****, and he has requested me to ask her, why she is so much out of Humour, as he is pleased to express it; for my part I am persuaded, she is very excusable, for who can be guilty of any Injustice to you Men? If you can find *St. Far****, I should be glad if you would bring him to me, he will discharge me from the Trouble of being his Advocate, and his Presence will facilitate their Reconciliation. My God! how ridiculous are all Lovers! I wish your Lordship a good Morrow.

L E T T E R VII.

TO what purpose, my Lord, do you excuse your self to me, and what Offence have I to lay to your Charge at present? You have, at last, acted with the Discretion I have long wished to see you discover, and I should have presented you with my Acknowledgments, if you had not imagined that I was displeased at your Proceeding. Let me intreat you to undeceive your self; the Fact is very different, and you can never merit my Hatred, by ceasing to torment me. I did not expect to see you so reasonable, and am delighted to find, that in doing Justice to your self, you
can

can likewise render it to me. You had no Cause to believe, that I had made my Husband privy to your Persecutions ; for I never was reduced to those Extremities as could make it necessary for me to resort to such a Remedy. The Coldness with which he treats you, can be imputed to none but your self ; you were not very solicitous, that the World should be unacquainted with your Affiduties to me, and you have disclosed your self to so many Confidants, that M * * * may possibly have had some Intimations of your Conduct. You have likewise exposed me to the Pleasantries of Lady G * * *, and I was on the Point of receiving her Congratulations, yesterday, for the Happiness I enjoy in your Addresses, and for my Sensibility of your Passion. This Lady seems to be much better acquainted with your Merit than my self, and I believe she considers me as her Rival ; but I can assure you, that all your Accomplishments will never reconcile me to that Title. I shall therefore take it as a Favour, if you will rectify the Suspensions, that have been created to my Disadvantage, by such false Insinuations ; for as I have never countenanced your Extravagancies, it would be very disagreeable to me to be thought capable of sharing them ; and I flatter my self, that your Honour, as a Gentleman,

would not permit me to be represented in such a Light. It is time to silence these Reports ; and since your frequent Visits to me are their principal Source, I must desire you to discontinue them. It is with some Reluctance, that I find my self obliged to come to such Extremities with you ; but remember that you your self compell'd me to fly to this Expedient, and that instead of a Heart, which I neither can, nor ought to offer you, I make you the Tender of a Friendship, which perhaps you may justly think more valuable.

L E T T E R VIII.

SI N C E you are so very importunate, I consent to see you, and am willing to grant this Favour to the Repentance, with which you seem to be affected ; and with a full Persuasion, that you will be punctual to your Promise, and that your Passion is really extinguished. But why, then, should you endeavour to rekindle it ; and if it be true, that you formerly loved me, will the daily Sight of me induce you to forget me ? I think it would be more consistent with Discretion, if our Interviews were not so frequent, and you only render'd me those Civilities, which your Sex usually express to
a Wo-

a Woman they esteem. I believe I can foresee, that our Friendship will have no long Continuance, and if I have any Penetration, your Cure is not so compleat as you intimate, or may possibly imagine it to be. Think of this with due Attention, and fortify your self against a Frailty, that troubles your Repose, and is fatal to the Tranquillity of my Soul. Were it possible for me to love you, can you imagine, that your Happiness would have any Increase, and that I should ever make my Duty subservient to a Caprice of Inclination, which would be the Reproach and Calamity of my Life? I am sensible that I pity you, but methinks that Pity should deprive you of all Hopes. Were I in a Disposition to be favourable to your Passion, my Disquiet would be less, for I am persuaded, your Conduct would soon incline me to be guided by my Duty, and the very possibility of creating any Suspicion of my Weakness is sufficient to guard me against it. You are, as yet, unacquainted with my Heart; it is equally delicate and imperious, and should I resign it to your Possession, I am certain, from your present Turn of Thought, that your Torments would be much superior to your Satisfaction. You have not been fated to entertain a Passion for me, by any Sentiments that were independent on your Will;

Will ; and I have never seen you influenced by such involuntary Emotions. Gallantry alone inclined you to distinguish me by your Addresses ; and you thought I should amuse you more agreeably than the generality of my Sex. Perhaps your Perfidy in some former Engagement, has left a Vacancy in your Heart, which you are desirous to fill with another Object : But as you have found me more inflexible than other Women, you are determined to pursue me without any Intermission, because my Insensibility is an Affront to your Vanity. I may add, that your Love, with all the Humility and Submission it affects to assume, is still injurious to my Virtue ; and your Attachment to me undoubtedly proceeds from your Persuasion, that I shall be conquer'd sooner than another Object. However that may be, I permit you to see me sometimes ; it is in your Power to fix your self in my Esteem, and if I have sufficient Reasons to be averse to your Passion, I have none that can induce me to refuse you a Friendship, which you will merit above the rest of your Sex, if you solicit me for nothing more. Adieu — Your Conduct will regulate mine.

L E T.

L E T T E R IX.

A H poor Count ! is it possible that you should be sick, and have Love for your Distemper ? Your Case is indeed very singular, and my Rigour will cost you your Life ! I never imagined that I was so formidable ; but let me intreat you not to die, since that Misfortune will give Posterity such an Idea of my Insensibility, as I may, possibly, not deserve. Some malicious Poet will disgrace your Tomb with a ridiculous Inscription, in which I shall be treated with too much Severity ; and I have no Inclination to furnish Matter to the Conceits of those Gentlemen. Besides, what Recompence will you expect me to afford you, if you die for me ? Would you have the Pleasure of imposing upon me a Tribute of Tears, which you can never be in a Condition to enjoy ? But what Satisfaction would it afford you, should I resolve, amidst my Anguish at your Death, to wander among the solitary Rocks, with a Resolution to fatigue the Echos with my plaintive Sorrow, and expostulate with inexorable Fate for the Loss of *Thyrsis*. Believe me, my Tears are unworthy the Pains you take to merit them, and our Sex is so extremely fickle, that perhaps I might have no Inclination to bewail

wail you. We forget a living Lover so very soon, that we are under no Necessity of bestowing much Remembrance on the Dead. But without entring on a Detail of what other Women might do at such a Juncture, I will freely confess to you, that none of my Sex can pretend to surpass me in Coquetry. Were I the Widow of one Lover, I should immediately entertain three more for my Consolation ; for how could a less Number make one any Recompence for such an afflictive Loss ? And therefore you, whom I cannot love, may easily judge how little I should be affected at your Death. You, whom I cannot love ! How inhuman does that Expression appear ! Why should I indulge all this Severity, and what Risque can I sustain by saying, to a poor dying Creature, *You whom I love a little* ? But is it therefore necessary, that you should believe me ? Why should that Word cost me so dear ? You have utter'd it to me a thousand times with a graceful Tenderness not to be described ; what Inconvenience, then, can I suffer by repeating it, especially when I consider your present Situation ? But what Advantage can you derive from that Word ? I am apt to think, that I discover more Malice than Compassion, when I declare that I love you. As long as your Indisposition continues, I shall make that

Confession

Confession to you with Pleasure. You will see me sympathise in your Sufferings, with so much Sensibility, I shall be so tractable and attentive, that you will be over-whelmed with Despair to recover your Health at the Expence of so many Favours. Your Condition is more dangerous than I at first apprehended: How! to take to a sick Bed, with no other View than to inspire me with tender Impressions! The Idea is indeed very singular, and I would not advise you to try its Efficacy with other Women, because I fear you would acquire no extraordinary Advantage from such a Stratagem. It would have been very pleasant, however, if you had plotted your self into a genuine Indisposition; forgive that ludicrous Thought, for, in reality, I think so indifferently of Mankind, that I believe there is no Artifice, which they do not practise, to impose upon our Credulity. But what can you hope from this Proceeding, and what will be the Consequence, should I discover that your Illness is an Imposition upon me? Nothing less than eternal Disdain. But if you have acted with Sincerity, I must afford you a little Compassion, because you do me the Honour to impute your Indisposition to my Cruelty. You may rest persuaded, that I will entertain a grateful Remembrance of
the

the Favour; but at present, I believe, the Recovery of your Health will be your discreetest Endeavour. Adieu, my Lord, and let me prevail upon you not to die. Take it for granted, that I am greatly afflicted, and entertain your self with the most pleasing Imaginations you can form. Remember to kiss my Letter, and play over all the Follies of a true Lover. I forgive you all Things at this time; but be sure to consider, that Love alone has the Privilege to dispose of you. You were desirous that I should write to you, and, in my present Disposition to refuse you nothing, how happy am I, that you are not in a Capacity to make any other Request. Pour Count!

L E T T E R X.

YOUR Manner of Thinking is certainly very peculiar: I have sent you the most tender Letter in the World, and made as sincere a Confession of my Weakness as you could possibly desire; but all this is insufficient, and you are still dissatisfied. The perpetual Gaiety of my Temper drives you to Despair: Admirable Prudence, to be disquieted at such a Calamity! Ought we not, in Love, to begin with some-

something, that appears a little diverting ? Perhaps I shall conclude in a more serious manner than I could wish. How do you know but that the Vivacity you complain of, may be my only Expedient to conceal half your Happiness from you, and to preserve me from the Confusion of declaring that I love you ? I suppose you will fancy this to be a new Flight of Raillery ; but if I should be a little insincere, would not a complaisant Fiction be more agreeable to you than a severe Truth ? You are strangely difficult to be pleased ; you put on Airs of Desperation, when I tell you ; that it is not in my Power to love you, and when I assure you that I am touched with your Passion, you cannot vouchsafe to believe me ; what an unaccountable Disposition is this ! Teach me how to acquire it, and I will promise you to find it constant Employment. I am as little satisfied with your Aversion to Life, and should be in some Apprehension for you, did we live in an Age, which made it fashionable for Lovers to destroy themselves, that they may have the Happiness of being lamented by their fair Tyrants ; but you are a Gentleman of Understanding, and know, as well as myself, that Death is the most ridiculous Proof of Love that can possibly be given. You will tell me, perhaps, that it was not in

Celadon's Power to forbear drowning himself ; but have you really taken him for your Model ? As to other Particulars, I am charmed with the Accounts I hear of you ; your Friends assure me, that the Concessions I have afforded you, contribute not a little to the Recovery of your Health : How could you be so malicious as to conceal this from me ? Have I not sufficiently bewail'd you ? Or can you imagine, that the News of your Recovery would be indifferent to me ? Ah my Lord ! how little are you acquainted with my real Disposition ! Could you but conceive how much I am afflicted at your Illness, how sincerely I wish for your Presence, and with what Ardour I offer up my Vows for your Welfare ; you would love me with infinitely more Tenderneſs than ever. I never knew, till now, that a Lover could be so entertaining. My Time has pass'd away so insipidly since I last heard you say, *I adore you* ; I have had so many Distractions of Thought, and am changed to such a Degree, that, were you to see me, you would be touched with as sincere a Pity for me, as you have inspired me with for your self. I fear 'tis imprudent in me, to acquaint you with all my Follies ; but my Anxiety for your Welfare would tempt me to greater Indiscretions. However, I promise

mise you nothing, and must desire you not to draw any advantageous Consequences from my Letter. I only permit you to discover, in it, my Affliction for the Misfortunes of my Friends; and that none of them has so great a Share of my Affection as your self. As to my Picture, which you are pleased to desire —— I was preparing to finish my Letter, when *St. Far* *** came into my Apartment; and, after a Number of Expostulations with me, on the melancholy Condition to which he pretends I have reduced you; Madam, *says he, with a serious Air*, these Barbarities are very ungrateful. It is altogether unreasonable, that, because you have fine Eyes, you should destroy an unfortunate Person, who adores you. What will it cost you to preserve his Life? He only begs you would permit him to love you; and, as to the rest, he refers himself to your Humanity, and the Services he is ambitious to render you. Your Severities are unnatural; it may, one Day, be your Fate to sigh for some unworthy Object; and God knows, how much you will then be obliged to reproach your self. As for my part, I am of Opinion, that you ought not to reject the Count; you have too much Judgment to disregard my Advice, and nothing but the Interest I take in whatever relates to

you, could induce me to offer it. Grant him a few small Favours, and there are a thousand, which are perfectly innocent. For Instance; *continued he*, that you may make him some Amends for your Absence, why should you not send him that little Picture, which lies idle upon your Toilet? You can hardly conceive, with what Gratitude, he will receive such a Present. At these Words, he thought fit to take it, and carry'd it away, notwithstanding all my Resentment, and repeated Refusals to entrust you with it. I am very well persuaded, that it is actually in your Hands at this Instant; but as I have no Intention to give it you, and am sensible, you are too much a Gentleman to keep it against my Inclinations, I must desire you to send it, by *St. Far****, to Lady ***. If you love me, as you would have me believe, dispose your self to obey me, and let not an obstinate Resolution to detain it, furnish me with Reasons to refuse it you for ever. — But are you not surprised at the Assurance of *St. Far****?

L E T T E R XI.

I AM very sensible you mistake that for Love, which is only an Instance of Friendship ; and I can comprehend the Extent of your Gratitude by the Ardour of your Acknowledgments : But they would be more satisfactory, if they did not exceed the Merit of an Obligation, which owes all its Existence to your Vanity, and the Certainty you presume to entertain of my Tenderness for you. I have sent you a Letter ; *St. Far**** seiz'd my Picture, and took the Liberty to deliver it to you ; these, as I suppose, are the Particulars you object against me ; and indeed they are the only Circumstances, on which you can possibly found my pretended Passion. I confess indeed, that I was very inconsiderate to believe my trifling with you, could be attended with no Consequence worth regarding. I will likewise acknowledge, that the natural Vivacity of my Temper, and my want of due Reflection on what you said to me, as well as on what I writ to you, made me answer your Letter incautiously enough to continue you in your Error. As I was sure, that I had not the least Passion for you, I was more unguarded than I should have been, had my Heart been inspired

with any tender Sentiments in your Favour ; and I indulged my self in Expressions, which were contradicted by my Conduct, and never ratified by my Heart. And yet you resolve to believe I love you. But what do I say ! Have you not too much Reason to believe it ? Alas ! my own Imprudence has promoted that Opinion in your Mind, more than all your Vanity ! Can I excuse my self for writing to you, and had I no other Expedient to prevent you from loving me ? Ought I not to have been sensible, that my Duty opposed such a Correspondence, and that how little soever a Woman may say on such an Occasion, she always says too much ? To what then, can I impute my easy Compliance ? I am conscious, that you are not the Object of my Love ; and was it possible for me to be deceived in that Persuasion ? But if I have been deluded by the Disposition of my Heart, how can I ever be acquainted with yours ? But why do I thus dissemble ? I wish to love you, and you know it too well ! Ah ! let us no longer persist in an Intercourse, for which I reproach my self as I ought, tho' the Innocence of my Intentions may render it excusable. Return me my Letters, and that fatal Picture. Let me intreat you to see me no more, or, at least, let not Love be your Language when

we

we meet. This you have promised already, and ought I not to hate you for being unfaithful to that Engagement? Let me, therefore, conjure you to speak to me no more: Not that I am apprehensive of the Impressions your Discourse may communicate to my Heart, since all the softest Powers of Insinuation, which seduce the generality of my Sex, will be unavailing with me; but, after all, it is most consistent with Discretion, to retreat from Danger; and every Woman, who depends too much on her Virtue, is sure to run the Risque of losing it. For my part, I have not that Confidence in mine, as to have any Inclination to expose it such a dangerous Trial, as the Sight of your Person, and the Attention to your ensnaring Language would prove. The Affiduities of a Lover, force those Satisfaction upon the Soul, which are irresistible; and our own Reflections rather contribute to our Ruin, than enable us to avoid it. How can I be certain, that Virtue will be victorious in the Conflict, since its Influences are too seldom efficacious in competition with Pleasure? In a word, I am determined to shun the Encounter; I will not receive any more of your Letters, and I am at a Loss to know, how I could prevail upon my self to write to you, after my last Resolution to the contrary: Nothing, but

but your Obstinacy could make me so inconsistent with my Intentions. I fancy my Letters give a better Turn to those things, which I express with too much Weakness and Irresolution, when I converse with you. Your Presence disconcerts my Thoughts, and makes me incapable of exerting myself as I ought, when I intreat you to torment me no more. Do not compel me to separate myself from you for ever: I have no Intention to conceal from you the Pangs I should sustain, were I fated to see you no more. When I consider you in the Quality of a Friend, I think you the most amiable of Mankind; but that unhappy Title of a Lover, makes me incapable of discovering all the real Merit you possess; I dread to examine it with any Attention; and there are some Moments wherein I wish you were either less engaging, or were capable of loving me in the manner I desire. Adieu; I have heard with exceeding Pleasure, that you are well; but I believe that Pleasure will be much increased, when you come to give me the Confirmation of that Report. Perhaps you will believe nothing of all this; but I must desire you not to make yourself ridiculous, and, that your Satisfaction may be perfect, I permit you to suppose, that I have some Inclination to be a little indiscreet.

B I L.

B I L L E T.

*I shall pass this Evening with the Marchioness * * * ; can you prevail upon your self to be there, at my Request, that we may have an Affignation in all its Forms? Be there however. I have an Inclination to devote the Evening to Pleasure, and cannot imagine why I should be always uneasy when you are absent. Perhaps it may be owing to the Satisfaction you seem to enjoy in my Company, and your Sollicitude to obtain it ; or it may proceed from my Opinion, that you are more agreeable to me than any other, and that the Friendship you profess for me is entitled to some Return, for I am not ungrateful. However, let me desire you to come in a proper Disguise, for your Uncle the Governor intends to be there. It was in vain for me to tell him, that the Ball would be detrimental to his Health ; he replied, that he could not owe his Death to a more amiable Cause. When I found my Persuasions had no Effect, I was obliged to let him be of the Party. He loves me ; but then he is extremely jealous and can never sleep. It would mortify him extremely, should he suspect you to be one of the Company ; but my Satisfaction will be as great, if I am not prevented, by his Presence, from enjoying your Conversation. Take those Precautions*

*cautions as may make you pass undiscovered, and rest assured, that my Eyes will distinguish you in any Disguise you assume. I shall be sensible of your Presence the Moment you enter the Room; and as I am persuaded you will have the same Penetration, I think it needless to give you any Description of the Habit in which I intend to appear. You have no Occasion to be under any Apprehensions about the Governour; Lady * * * has taken upon her to engross his whole Attention, and I shall not place myself near him, for more Reasons than one.*

L E T T E R X I I .

HOW seasonably did that Lady join the Company yesterday, to convince me of your Ingratitude and Perfidy; and, that all the Protestations you have so frequently repeated to me, were but the lively Sallies of your Fancy, and not the Dictates of your Heart! I have been sensible, for some time, that you thought her amiable; and your Behaviour in her Presence, is a Confirmation of the Particulars I have already heard. You appear'd in the utmost Confusion; the Expostulations of her Eyes, entirely disconcerted you, and seem'd to reproach you with some uncommon

mon

mon Crime. When they were fixed upon you, I, from time to time, beheld them melting into Tears, which she, in vain, endeavoured to suppress. I heard her sigh, and observed several Instances of her moving Anguish ; and as unpolite as it was in you, to leave me at that time, you chose to be guilty of that Incivility, rather than give me an Opportunity of hearing her Reproaches. You afterwards came back to me, but extremely confused, and tho' you affected all the Airs of Gaiety and Ease, the incoherent Turn of your Discourse sufficiently discovered the Mortification you received from this Adventure. You easily presaged the Consequence, and might naturally imagine, that I should form some Reflections, that would not be much to your Advantage. And would you, then, be so ungenerous as to deceive me ! Is it from you, that I have merited such a Treatment ! Did I ever appear solicitous to be the Object of your Passion, and are you not the most perfidious of Mankind ! O righteous Heavens ! how deplorable must be the State to which I beheld that unhappy Person reduced, and what Calamities, ought I to expect, should I ever be so weak as to love you ! You have already sacrificed that Lady to the Vanity of being reputed the Possessor of my Affections ; but you shall never

never sacrifice me to a frail Inclination to reinstate your self in her Heart. It will be in vain for you to tell me, that I ought not to be apprehensive of that Misfortune. Is there any Defect in that Lady, which can justify your Infidelity to her? She has all the Charms of Youth and Beauty, in Conjunction with the Advantages of Wit and Birth. She once sincerely loved you, nay, I am persuaded, she sincerely loves you still. As yet, her Conduct has not degraded her to the Level of those unhappy Women, who, when you are pleased to abandon them, awake a penitent Shame within you, for having ever loved them. Her fond Passion for you, is her only Reproach; but, at the same time, it is a Reproach, to which she might, possibly, have never been obnoxious, had not her Weakness been pointed out by your officious Indiscretion. And can you now imagine, that after all the apparent Reasons I have to detest you, I shall ever be guilty of such an unpardonable Infatuation, as to place my Heart, my Honour and my Repose, in your dangerous Power? Can you believe, that I will confide in the Love you swear my Eyes have kindled in your Soul, when every Circumstance of your Conduct makes it evident, that all the warm and tender Language, in which your Addresses to me were deliver'd,

flow

flow'd rather from your fatal Ability to feign it, than from any Reality of Passion. You offer'd, yesterday, to clear up my Suspicions ; but my Silence made you easily conceive the Justice of those Reproaches I was preparing for you. Would any Intimations of Guilt have been visible in the Air of your Behaviour, without some sufficient Cause ; and would your Impatience to justify your self have appeared so uncommon, if you had not been conscious of some Crime ? Believe me, I was sensibly afflicted at what I beheld ; not from any real Tendernefs for you ; but because I once thought you a Man of Honour. If I may be permitted to advise you, let what you have already done, remain as it is ; and forbear to aggravate it by any future Apologies, which will only lessen you in my Estimation. Your Discourse will not be so persuasive with me, as you may imagine. Falshood is my perpetual Aversion ; I have some Penetration ; and it will undoubtedly embarrass you a little. For which reason, it will be better for us to continue as we are at present. If, however ——— Good God ! can I be weak enough to wish you may be able to justify your self !

L E T T E R XIII.

IN what Manner would you have me express my self to you? I imagined you had deceived me; I was even convinced of your Guilt, and yet when I had listen'd to your Language but a few Moments, my Heart was so impatient to acquit you, that it contradicted the Testimony of my Eyes; it even renounced its own Conviction, and entertain'd an implicit Persuasion of your Innocence. Yes, my Lord, I am willing to believe you worthy of my Esteem; you desire this Instance of my Complacency; and I will confess, that I might possibly have been imposed upon by my Suspicions. The Sentiments of my Soul are too delicate, and have betrayed me into Misapprehensions of your Virtue, that I ought not to have founded upon such faint Probabilities. You are dearer to me than I can well express, and my Friendship for you is so exquisitely tender, that it is easily alarmed at every Circumstance that bears the least unfavourable Aspect; it is jealous, and unreasonable; and, to oblige you, I will add, that it is too severe, in the Restraints it would lay upon your Conduct: But you know I promised you a few Extravagancies sometimes; and yet let me intreat
you

you not to be so unjust as to hate me. If you really love me, your own Heart will furnish me with a Vindication of my Weakness. Be satisfied, if possible, with the Assurances I give you of a constant and untainted Friendship, and let me taste the Pleasure of yours, since this is a Blessing I can enjoy without any Remorse. Let us not seek for Misfortunes, which, at present, we may easily elude; and, as we are still in Possession of some Remains of Reason, let us employ it to extinguish those Inclinations, which, without its Assistance, may be reproachful to us both, and perhaps are already so. To what a fatal Situation do you reduce me! I am conscious of those Emotions, which I dare not examine with a due Calmness of Thought; I suffer myself to be insensibly led on by my first Reflections; I want Resolution to turn my Eyes upon myself; and every thing conspires to plunge me in a dreadful Abyss. The very Sight of it fills me with Consternation, and yet I precipitate myself into the fatal Gulph. I would willingly hate you, if that were possible; I am sensible that you treat me with Injustice, and yet I have not the Power to entertain any Resentment against you. There are some Moments wherein you are my Aversion, because you love me; and there are others wherein you would still be more

odious to me, if you regarded me with Indifference. Every Circumstance intimates to me that I ought to disregard you; but you tell me the contrary, and I blush to think I have not Resolution enough to contradict you. In vain do I endeavour to conceal my Confusion from you; every little Incident makes me sensible of its Impressions. My Inquietude in your Absence; my Transports when I behold you; your Idea which is perpetually interwoven in my Soul; and my criminal Inclinations sometimes suppress'd, and immediately reviving with a more tyrannic Power —— O Heavens! whither shall I fly from such a Combination of fatal Foes! My Sighs and Tears, and even my strongest Oppositions, give new Vigour to my unhappy Passion. Should not the frightful Aspect of a Crime be a sufficient Diffusive against it? What can be so dreadful, as to find one's self engaged in a Conflict, without the least Hopes of Victory? Has Duty, then, so little Prevalence against the Power of Love? Ah me! Can I presume to flatter myself with the languid Remains of Virtue! Have I a competent Share of it to enable me to fly, for ever, from your sight; or do I even wish that I had such a Power! Do not believe, however, that I love you. I have not lost the Remembrance of myself to that wretched Degree; and yet I cannot answer

answer for my Conduct, should I still consent to see you. But this Acknowledgment will be no Addition to your Happiness, and I can impart it to you without a Crime, when I declare, at the same time, that we must now be separated for ever. I ought, without doubt, to have form'd this Resolution long ago ; but I depended too much on my own Sufficiency, and did not impose that Silence upon you which was necessary to my Quiet ; but I shall hardly relapse into the same Frailty for the future. I am sensible, there are unguarded Moments, and I am as little exempted from them as another. I am now preparing to go far, very far from you, in search of that Repose which perhaps I shall never obtain. I shall endeavour to erase you from my Remembrance, and I ought to call up all the Powers of my Soul to aid me in that Intention. Make no Attempts to see me ; for those fatal Interviews have already cost me too many Sighs, and I should consent to trust myself in your Presence again ; how can I be certain that I shall accomplish my Resolution to withdraw myself from you for the Remainder of my Days ? I say, how can I, who begin to be alarm'd when you have been absent from me but a Day, be able to bring my Passions into so much Subjection ? Why is it impossible for me to love you

without a Crime! Ah! were my Passion but consistent with Innocence, you should no longer complain of my Insensibility; nor should the softest Ardours of my Soul then cover me with Confusion. But such is my Situation, that the very Pity I afford you is my Reproach. Did I say, Pity! Ah! can I be so infatuated, as to give that cold Name to the Emotions I experience; and could my Heart be so fatally tormented by such a Trifle! I am now going to obtain my Husband's Permission to linger out, in the Country, those Days which your Absence will render very languishing and undelightful: But, whatever may be the Event, this is the only Expedient that can preserve my Virtue, and I cannot purchase it too dearly. You sollicit me to grant you an Interview; what Reply would you desire me to make, and what Concessions can I afford you, wherein my Honour will not be interested? Let us not contrive to render ourselves still more unhappy; our Meeting will only soften us into new Weakness; and therefore endeavour to banish me from your Thoughts: But I fear it will be impossible for me to forget you, for ever; at least you shall not be the Witness of my Frailty. Adieu — I have read your Letter once more, and begin to think that I ought not to refuse you a Moment's Audience, for the last Time. Take
a Walk,

a Walk, at nine in the Morning, in the Gardens that belong to * * * perhaps you may find me there. Forgive me this Doubt ; for I am in such a State of Sorrow and Uncertainty, that were you to see me, I am sure you would pity me.

L E T T E R X I V .

HOW fatal is Love to us both ! I not only feel the Severity of my own Torments, but I likewise suffer those which I am so unhappy as to create in you ; and am the more to be pitied, because I have no Permission to afford you any Consolation, and am unable to oppose my ardent Desire to see you once more. Is it thus that I triumph over my Weakness ! We have mutually sworn never to meet again ; but alas ! how can I depend on those Oaths, which are every Moment invalidated by your Transports and my Tears ! Can we declare, in a more effectual manner, that we intend to persist in our Passion to the latest Gasps ? Why have you retarded my Departure, and why will you not permit me to fortify myself in my Duty ? Perhaps, by this Time, I had defaced your Idea from my Remembrance, or, at least, my Honour, as well as Interest, would have prompted me to that Attempt ;

Attempt ; and tho' it would have cost me many tender Tears, yet, at last, I should have obey'd the Impulse, and might, possibly, have extinguished a Passion, which your Presence and resistless Language are perpetually increasing. Pity the Condition to which I am reduced, and resolve never to see me more. Be guided by my Example, in the Suppression of a Flame which must be fatal to me in the Event. Reflect on the Calamities that will be inseparable from our Intercourse : The Forfeiture of my Reputation, the Loss of my Husband's Esteem, and perhaps something worse. As much Purity as refines our Sentiments, for I will suppose yours are conformable to mine ; can you believe the World will render us the Justice we deserve, and not take some malignant Opportunity to depreciate my Virtue ? Your Merit alone would suffice for my Condemnation. My Sex, judging of me by themselves, will never be persuaded that my converse with you was confined to the Limits of Friendship. Those, whose Actions have been the most exceptionable, will be the first to censure my Conduct ; and I shall not, like them, have the Effrontery to be unaffected with such injurious Discourse. The only Means to free me from so many Fears, will be to withdraw myself from you ; for whilst we continue in the same Place, I shall

shall ever be diffident of myself. Assist me, I conjure you, to vanquish my Weakness! You wish that I would consent to see you again; but would it be prudent in me to expose myself to so much Danger; and will not this Interview be as unsuccessful as the last? Shall I have Resolution enough to give you the final Farewell? If you will be guided by my Advice, you will not be solicitous to see me. Consult your own Heart on this Occasion; for, whatever may be the Event, I shall comply with all you request. I shall be, about Noon, at Lady *** Ah! what Tears will this fatal Day cost me!

L E T T E R X V .

WHAT kind of Confession do you request, and in what Instance will the Word you so much desire, contribute to your Happiness? Let me enjoy the Satisfaction of believing you have not entirely penetrated to the Bottom of my Heart; and let me intreat you to leave me the only Secret I wish to retain; I shall not conceal it from you long, and my Conduct will make you ample Amends for my Silence. What can you require more? I continue in Town, and am no longer solicitous for your Departure. Could you maintain such an exact Intelligence with
my

my Eyes, if you did not understand their Language? Ah! would to God you were as doubtful of my Tenderneſs as you are now certain of it! your Love would then be more ardent: But ſhould I diſcloſe to you the true Diſpoſition of my Soul, that Diſcovery would, perhaps, diſpoſſeſs me of your Heart; and the Assurance that you were belov'd would deprive you of the Pleaſure you enjoy in wiſhing to be ſo. Without doubt I treat you with Injuſtice, but you may eaſily judge of my Paſſion by my Diffidence. I tremble leſt you ſhould repent of your Choice; I dread the Efforts of my Rivals; I am even apprehenſive of myſelf, and of you moſt of all. My Huſband affects me with Diſquietude, I am agitated by Remorſe, and my Heart is as much diſcompos'd as yours is ſerene. How happy is your Sex, in their Prerogative to purſue their Inclinations without the Checks of Shame and Confuſion! whiſt we, who are under the Tyranny of unjuſt Laws, are compell'd to conquer the Impulſe of Nature, who has implanted, in our Hearts, the ſame Deſires that predominate in yours, and are ſo much the more unfortunate as we are obliged to oppoſe your Sollicitations and our own Frailty. How different are theſe Reflections from thoſe I made two Days ago! At what a vaſt Remove am I placed from my Reason! But,

after

after all, was it possible for that Reason to resist you to any length of Time; and is it not a Weakness in me to regret its Loss? You are my Husband's intimate Friend; conduct yourself with Discretion towards him; he is not jealous, but Vanity is his prevailing Frailty; and should he ever suspect he was injured, he would abandon himself to all the Extremities that the most amorous of Mankind could be capable of pursuing on such an Occasion. Let us be careful to prevent the Calamities that would infallibly overwhelm us; and we may easily succeed in that Design. His Attachment to other Objects; his Coldness to me, and his Application to his Amours, will divert his Attention from the Ardours we indulge; but, if it be possible, let us conceal our mutual Emotions in Publick. I am now preparing, for your Satisfaction and our Security, to withdraw myself from the Crowd that I once thought so necessary to dissipate my Anxiety. You, my dearest Lord, shall be my All; let us enjoy ourselves sequester'd from the World; Love shall fill up the Spaces of our charming Moments, and let the short Duration of our Days be the only Subject of our Complaints. Your Letter gives me to understand that I have been conversant in your Thoughts; I have employed part of the Night in writing to you, and it is thus that I dispose of
my

my Time in your Absence. Can I devote it to a more endearing Purpose? My Letter declares that I love you, and I only wait for your Presence to make you the same Confession.

B I L L E T.

*What is your Opinion of yesterday's Entertainment? Did not the Duke of *** perform the Honours of it in the most enchanting Manner? Is he not the most gallant and magnificent of Mankind, and could you reasonably desire to be absent from such a Scene of Pleasure? Could a Night be passed more agreeably than it was in that Place? I can assure you, all imaginable Justice was paid to your Merit. You was acknowledged to have a noble Air, an easy Comportment, a charming Vivacity of Wit, and Eyes so irresistible ——— In a word, a most adorable Form. And who was the Person that entertain'd so just an Idea of your Lordship? The most amiable Lady in all the Assembly; the Dutchess her self, to whom I fancy you have promised to write, and perhaps you may now be reading a Letter from her. I congratulate you upon your new Conquest, and am perswaded you will greatly advance your Affairs very soon; but will you be as expeditious as my self, who have the Duke this Moment at my Bed-side?*

L E T.

L E T T E R XVI.

YOU have certainly the most shining Wit of any Man in the World. How tender is the Style of your Letter ; and what a Number of charming Qualities unite to make you amiable ! You are undoubtedly the most accomplish'd Person of your Sex, and I love you with all the Ardour that ever warm'd a Female Breast. You are the delightful Subject of all my Thoughts, and without you, the most exquisite Pleasures are unaffecting ; but there is only one Species of them which I can possibly possess, and to be sincere with you, I intend to confine myself to that alone. I dare say you will think this something extraordinary : But whether it be that Romances have misguided my Mind in this particular, or else, that such a Turn of Thought was infused into my Soul at my Birth, I can only declare, that I am unable to comprehend in what Instance the Affair, you had the Goodness to propose to me, can be so essential to my Happiness as you imagine. I have already anticipated every Circumstance, which your Wit can recollect to induce me to a Compliance. I have even endeavoured to become a Convert to your Sentiments. I have imaged to myself the whole Assemblage of your Charms ;

G

the

the Inquietudes you sustain ; your interrupted Slumbers, and all your languid Moments ; and yet find your Proposal as unperfuasive as ever. Judge then, by the Inefficacy of my Endeavours, what Success you may expect from yours. Perhaps, as you intimate, it may be an unspeakable Pleasure to dispense Happiness to the Person we love ; but why should not your Felicity be compleated by those Enjoyments that constitute mine ? Your Heart suffices my utmost Wish, why then cannot you limit your Desires to the Possession of mine ? How ridiculous are you Men, with your Train of Inclinations ! You have frequently promised me, that you would be satisfied, if you could obtain from me an Acknowledgment of my Passion : Why did I not oblige you to be always making the same Request ? I am sensible that my easy Compliance with that Desire, would naturally dispose you to expect every other Concession from my Weakness ; but I already know too well, how much it has cost me to be more indulgent to you than I ought to declare. Do not compel me to change those Sentiments in your Favour that I now entertain. Have you any Inclination to make me believe that I must soon lose your Esteem ? That imaginary Happiness, for which you now sigh with so much Ardour, has none of those inviting Charms which you
are

are willing to ascribe to it, and perhaps it might extinguish the real Satisfaction we now enjoy. Love is apt to grow languid, in soft Scenes of Pleasure, and when our Desires are no longer interested in our Enjoyments, they begin to be very inconsiderable. Our Passion has, hitherto, derived all its Sweets from the pleasing Union of our Souls, and we ought to congratulate ourselves for the Virtue we have preserved, when we consider that we have had the Power to resign it. But am I not very ridiculous to talk to you of Reason? Should I not be satisfied with the Opposition I have already made to your Desires; and can I justly be offended at a Proposal, which is authorized by Custom, and very seldom rejected? But I have already told you, that my Disposition is very peculiar. The Examples of others contribute very little to my Improvement; and tho' you should resolve to abandon me, after you had treated me with all imaginable Rigour, I am persuaded it would be better to lose a Lover who is dissatisfied with our Cruelty, than one who is satiated with our Favours. I wish I could make my Conduct more agreeable to you; but I love you with too much Tenderness and Sincerity, to have any Inclination to lose you so soon, and my Resistance, in this Particular, ought to convince you of the Soli-

dity of my Affection. Besides, should I prevail upon myself to grant you all the Happiness you desire, I should be deprived of the Satisfaction I receive from your Impatience ; and I have not the least Reason to believe that the Joys you represent to be so exquisite, would ever yield me any Recompence for that Loss. 'Tis in vain for you to assure me that Favours are the Food of Love, for I am sensible they are a Sustenance which has always been fatal to that Passion. Reproach me with the severe Names of *Cruel* and *Ingrate* ; exhaust all the Displeasure and Indignation of injur'd Heroes ; my Resolutions must still flow in their proper Channel. Adieu, my dear angry Count. Any Woman, but myself, would be extremely out of Humour, to be solicited for such an extraordinary Proof of Love ; but I am not Prude enough to assume that Air, and am inclined to think, that Women, in such a Case, are seldom at Variance with a Lover, but with an Intention to make the next Accommodation, between them, responsible for all the Frailty which may ensue. Heavens grant that I may neither be so capricious, nor so weak ! We will sup together this Evening in my Apartment ; you see I take no Precautions against you ; but I know myself, and shall always make my Love correspond

respond with my Virtue. Yes, my Lord,
I say *always*.

L E T T E R XVII.

TO be very plain with you, my Lord, you may think of the Affair as you please, but I am determined to persist in my Resolution. If Love gives you so much Anxiety, resume your Liberty; you find my Chains too weighty, and I can't bear to see my Slave desirous of subjecting me to his Laws. Is your aiming at my Dishonour, any Proof that you sincerely love me? Perfidious Man! How very wretched would you render me, could you derive, from my Weakness, the Satisfaction you desire! Can you imagine then, that if my Virtue made no Opposition to your Wishes, I could yet be so infatuated, as to close my Eyes against the Calamities which would follow such a Proceeding? Amidst the Pangs of Shame, which my own Reflections would create within me, and amidst the Torments I should sustain from you, Ingrate as you are! who would soon compel me to repent that I had sacrificed all my Happiness to your Inclinations; I should see the Master succeed the Lover; and, instead of persisting in your Passion with increasing Ardours, your Love would languish

guish into Indifference, and cause me to pay dear for the Weakness of affording it the fatal Gratifications into which it had betrayed me: I should see your Esteem for me, expiring with that Love; the Assiduities I should then receive from you, would only flow from your Generosity, and my perpetual Apprehensions of losing you, would soon make that Loss a Reality. I should, even then, have some Remains of Happiness, were I only to be sacrificed to one Rival, and could hope that the World would be unconscious of my Shame. It is in vain for you to call Heaven to Witness, that you have no Intentions to treat me with that ungenerous Barbarity. Have not all those unhappy Women, who are the Victims to Man's Perfidy, had Lovers who made the same Protestations to them, which I receive from you? And yet, have they found those Protestations any Security from the Misfortunes I dread; and did the most solemn Oaths of their Lovers preserve them from their Infidelity? I tremble at so many fatal Examples, and should deserve to be added to their Number, if I neglected their Admonitions. Perhaps I might not be so unfortunate as I imagine; but can you believe the Delicacy of my Passion would be satisfied with a Constancy which proceeded from Constraint, and would be equally
torment-

tormenting to us both? I'll acknowledge your Discretion to be as perfect as possible; but that's a Quality, which, as yet, I never wanted any Person to exert in my Favour. You might, possibly, screen me from publick Reproach; but alas! who would have the Power to screen me from the Remorse of my own Heart? Can you believe, that all the Privity with which my Passion for you is conducted, exempts me from that dreadful Pang? I love you, my Lord, and I avow it; but let us not add to this Frailty, those which are still more odious. I had not the Power to oppose the Tenderneſs I entertain for you; the Emotions of the Heart are not subordinate to the Judgment: But, surely, I have the Ability to be virtuous; and we never cease to be so, against our Inclinations. I begin to think I hate you, since you torment me in this manner: Ought you not, in Justice, to be content with my Love, without ſolliciting that from me, which I am not in a Capacity to grant? Can you not be certain that you poſſeſs my Heart, unleſs I abandon myſelf to all your Deſires? Ah me! if you did not enjoy that Certainty, you would never have ſo little Heſitation to offend me! Let me intreat you then, not to abuſe my Facility to forgive you: I am ſenſible that, with all my Reſentment, you are dearer to me than I could wiſh; but reſt aſſured,

fured, that whatever Tortures a Rupture with you may cost me, I shall still have Resolution enough to sacrifice you to my Honour. Where that is not interested, I will never refuse you any thing, to convince you how much I love you. Adieu, my dear Count; I am pretty liberal of my Reproaches; but if I did not love you with a Tenderness above Description, I should not be so sensible of the Injustice you offer me. Shall I see you to Day? — I shall pass the greatest Part of it at Lady *** I know it will cost me a few Trifles, to make my Peace with you; but then I shall regain your Heart upon easy Terms, and when you desire no more than — Adieu, I hear the Marquis, and am certain he has not good Nature enough to approve what I write to you.

B I L L E T.

I am persuaded you have had but a very indifferent Night, and am as much assured, that the Conversation of the German Baron, prov'd as disagreeable to you, as it was pleasing to me. I gave you a great deal of Mortification yesterday; but did you not deserve it? Why did you put on that gloomy Air, and affect to speak to me with so much Coldness? You intended to make me jealous, and I chagrin'd you to Desperation. You assured
Lady

Lady
other
I, by
you
would
stancy
pensiv
me a
of L
ficien
just
wret
an u
satisf

I
to f
be
lous
Ca
for
Un
he
litt
and
Na
just

*Lady *** , that you loved her ; with no other View , than to give me Torment ; and I , by a single Glance on a Gentleman , gave you more Disquietude , than , perhaps , you would have created in me , by a real Inconstancy . I had the Pleasure to make you as pensive , as you was at first agreeable . Let me advise you not to play off these little Arts of Love ; we Women are much better Proficients in them than your Sex ; and I have just Coquetry enough to render you the most wretched of Mankind , whenever you make an unseasonable Attempt to give me any Satisfaction .*

L E T T E R XVIII.

I Can pardon all Injuries from Rivals when they are not beloved ; but am unable to forgive you , for suffering your Reason to be disordered , by the Insinuations of a jealous old Lady , when you had not the least Cause to suspect the Reality of my Passion for you . Did I give the least Credit to your Unkle the Governour's Discourse , when he told me , you was indiscreet , an affected little Creature , very fortunate with our Sex , and a hundred thousand Things of the same Nature ? Would it not have been very unjust in me , to have form'd an Opinion of you ,
from

from a Report wherein the Author was so much interested? Has not the Continuance of my Tenderneſs for you, ſufficiently declared my Diſbelief of thoſe Aſperſions; and did I even ſeem inclinable to credit the Evidence of my own Eyes? Why then do you not imitate my Example? You have been informed that I deceive you, and indulge, with Pleaſure, any Impreſſion to my Diſadvantage. If you really loved me, with the Ardour you profeſs, could you poſſibly be ſo credulous? Do I conceal from you, the leaſt Circumſtance of my Conduct; and are not all my Actions regulated by your Orders? Can you be ſo injurious to me, as to believe I even need your Directions, and that Love cannot ſufficiently inſtruct me how to contribute to your Satisfaction? Would to God you were capable of reading the true State of my Heart! But why ſhould I form that Wiſh! The Diſcovery of ſuch a Profuſion of Love would embarraſs you, and your natural Inſenſibility would be too much diſcompoſed. Ah my Lord! if your Paſſion were but equal to mine, you would never be diffident of my Tenderneſs: Nor do you affect that Diffidence, but to diſengage yourſelf, ungrateful as you are, from a correſponding Return! What can you complain of in my Behaviour? Have you any one Rival, whom I have not ſacrificed to your Repoſe? And did

did I
Cenſu
a Pro
tifice
Proof
to ap
imme
ment
exam
scribe
all m
Preſe
I ſho
confe
ſtrict
the
have
conf
and
to b
You
Con
you
alon
Exp
non
dou
but
no
gro
Tim

did I discover any Apprehensions of those Censures I might draw upon myself, by such a Proceeding? Have I acted with any Artifice or Reserve, when I gave you the tender Proofs of my Passion? You desired me not to appear, so frequently, in Publick, and I immediately confined myself to my Apartment. I never had the least Inclination to examine, whether you had any Right to prescribe Laws to me, and was content to limit all my Satisfactions to you alone: Your dear Presence is sufficient for my Happiness, and I should have reproached myself, had I been conscious of any Repugnance to that Restriction. Perhaps you are dissatisfied with the Equality of my Conduct; and as you have been conversant with the capricious Inconsistencies of Coquets, their little Frauds and unmeaning Language, you now begin to be uneasy that you have nothing to fear. You are disgusted at the artless Air of my Conversation; I am perpetually repeating to you, that I tenderly love you; I tell it you alone, and my Eyes, which are the faithful Expositors of my Thoughts, are directed to none but you. I can perceive that my Ardours grow painful to you, and only contribute to flatter your Vanity. Your Heart is no longer my Property; your Assiduities grow languid, and you only visit me, from Time to Time, to give me a more fatal Sensibi-

Sensibility of the Torments I sustain in your Absence. In vain do you sometimes endeavour to conceal your Coldness from my Penetration, it pierces thro' the thin Disguise you attempt to cast around it; which convinces me that your Love is no more than Artifice. I receive the same Conviction from the Emotions of my own Heart: You could once persuade me, with a single Word, that you loved me; but now all your Solitudes to induce me to that Belief, only serve to increase my Distrust. Adieu; I have not seen you these two Days, and I wish you had not given yourself the Trouble to write to me, since you intended to say so many disobliging Things. Come to me, however, this Evening, for I shall be glad to have some Explication with you. Once more Adieu; as much Reason as I have to resent your Suspicions, it is impossible for me to declare how much I love you.

L E T T E R X I X .

I Was not so happy, my dear Count, as to see you yesterday; but it was not in my Power to disengage myself from a Visit my Husband proposed to me; and tho' my Aversion to the Company was as great as possible; yet, had I discover'd too much Disinclination

inclination to attend him it might have given him some disagreeable Thoughts; and our Happiness depends upon his Insuspicion. I must acquaint you then, that we, yesterday, waited upon his Mother. But, Oh Heavens! what Company did I find there! I needed no ill Humour to make it insupportable. The whole was a Composition of Indecorum and Stupidity, not easy to be imagined. The insipid Marquis of * * *, half sick and half amorous, with a monstrous Patch upon his Forehead, and a wither'd Complexion, mutter'd out part of an Opera, and, at the same Time, cast a languishing Look at that solemn prude Lady * * *, who with a devout and contrite Air, sigh'd with much Sensuality for the Chevalier N * * *, whilst he was uttering abundance of respectful Dulness to the Daughter of that Bigot. The two Ladies * * * found themselves Employment in saying all the disagreeable Things of the Men which the Men think of them. My Husband, with a negligent Loll said the greatest Indecencies in the World with the modestest Air imaginable, to soft Lady * * *. The sedate prude, Lady * * *, for want of a proper Companion to form a Party of Scandal, amused herself with the Commendations of our Author, whose Merit the dreary Counsellor * * * * contested with her learned Ladyship. R * * * made
H execrable

execrable Verses with admirable Facility. My Husband's Mother and mine were invoking the Mercies of God, at the same Time that they wounded the Reputation of their Neighbours without the least Remorse. The rest of the good Company entertain'd themselves at Play. For my part, I was the Spectatress of this amiable Scene, and can assure you that I did not misimprove my Time, but had the Pleasure to think, whilst I was surveying the Absurdities of this Company, that I loved the most amiable Man in the World, and was happy in his Passion for me. My Vanity was agreeably flatter'd to see the worthy Gentlemen in this Assembly so inferior to yourself. How infinitely dear to me, were you at that Moment! But I don't consider that I am giving myself very extraordinary Flights. I intended to write to you, with no other View than to know if you are not displeased with me, and to intreat you to love me with a perpetual Sincerity; tho' it seems I have not writ one Syllable to that purpose. But you may easily supply that Deficiency. I am not in a Disposition to be in Love to-day, and perhaps I should be too cold in telling you those things which you deserve to have expressed to you with all the Warmth of a tender Imagination. This is not the Effect of Caprice; but I think I am not amiable to-day; Vexation

has

has given me a very disagreeable Air, and I cannot persuade myself that you would think my Tendernefs any Obligation in my present Condition. My Chagrin is attended with a violent Pain in my Head; and all these Misfortunes coming together, make my Person insupportable even to myself. Surely done may well be melancholy, to be deprived of the Prefence of that Person one loves, and to pass a whole Day with a disobliging Husband: And how is it possible to have any Satisfaction, when one sees a Set of reverend Prudes, hears a Marquis uttering soft Absurdities, and especially when one knows, at the same time, that one has a very impatient Lover to deal with, and who will never let one enjoy a little Repose. How can one possibly be in a perpetual Conflict? I see so many Women who yield at last, and perhaps, after all their Resistance, are only chagrin'd that they did not surrender sooner.

— How is it possible for one to have any Tranquillity, at such a Thought! Ah! my Lord, if ——— Adieu; I should write to you till to-morrow, if I had not heard that Prude, Lady * * * coming. How disagreeable are these very virtuous Ladies! And would I cease to be one?

L E T T E R XX.

YOUR Suspensions give me some Disquiet; but I think them much preferable to that Security in which you have so long been sunk, and pardon you all the Injustice with which you treat me. Your Dissatisfaction is the first Proof you have yet given me of your Passion, and I am not inclinable to require any more. Your Conjecture was just, when you imagined that your Friend the Marquis * * * loved me; but you deceived yourself when you thought I made him any Return. I confess, you have some Reason to reproach me, for I ought not to have conceal'd his Passion from you. It was even incumbent on me to have banished him from my Presence, the first Moment he made me the Declaration of his Sentiments. But you yourself presented him to me; you told me that he was your intimate Friend, and I admitted his Visits in Conformity to your Inclinations. You are sensible of my Aversion to new Acquaintance. Could I divine that he would ever entertain a Passion for me, and when he did, was it proper for me, who am so well acquainted with your impetuous Disposition, to impart to you such a Secret? I thought it would be better to discountenance his Passion, and

and leave him destitute of all Hope, than to expose both you and myself to a disagreeable Adventure, which, however it may happen to be conducted, has always an Intermixture of Cruelty. I should never have troubled you with this Confession, if the Inquietudes I sustain from that Man had not made it unavoidable. I shall not give you a particular Account of all the Severities with which I have treated him, to induce him to discontinue his Addresses; such a Detail would be altogether unnecessary: I may add too, that you would never prevail upon yourself to believe me; and my Sensibility of your Passion, inclines you to think me incapable of Indifference to any one, who pleases to admire me. But, at present, I shall not expatiate on your Conceptions of my Conduct, the Idea would awake my Resentment, and the least Instance of that Emotion, would be sufficient to make you tax me with seeking a Pretext to extinguish a Passion that you imagine no longer delights me. I am solicitous to convince you of the Sincerity of my Affection, and every other Care is lost in this. I have been as vigilant as possible to withdraw myself from the Visits I detest; and if you will appeal to your own Remembrance, you must be sensible that I assured you I was greatly dissatisfied with this Person, tho' at the same

time you condemned my Aversion to him; you compelled me to receive his Visits; and the only Answer you vouchsafed to my Complaints was, that I was very capricious in my Disposition. Can you suppose that I would so long have suffer'd him to converse with me in the manner he did, if your Indiscretion had not compelled me to indulge him in the Liberties he assumed. He yesterday acquainted me with a Circumstance that made me tremble; he is sensible that I love you, and is conscious of several Particulars, of which you alone could inform him. I congratulate myself, however, that I have given you no Opportunity of making him privy to any other Secret; and that I have not the Mortification of beholding my Honour and Repose in the Power of a Villain who has basely betrayed his Friend. I have ordered my Servants to refuse him Admittance, and am-determined to confine myself forever, to my Apartment, if I can avoid him by no other Precautions. I have sufficient Reason to believe, that this proceeding will drive him to some violent Extrems, and must expect, when Rage succeeds the Passion he entertained for me, that he will endeavour to blast my Reputation, and will even traduce me to my Husband. But if you are resolved to avenge yourself, in Opposition to all my Intreaties, let me, at least, prevail upon

upon you to wait for a lawful Motive, and do not hasten my Destruction by any unreasonable Resentment. This is the only Condition, on which you will be intitled to the Preservation of my Heart, as well as to my Pardon for your placing me in the most fatal Situation, in which I have ever beheld myself. As yet I have not imparted to you all my Fears and Dissatisfactions. I foresee, that this Affair is not to close in Tranquillity ; I am sensible, that I must lose you for ever ; but if you had ever loved me, ingrate as you are ! your Indiscretion would never have exposed me to the Horror of beholding you risque your Life, and to the Anguish of not daring to see you for the future, without new Confirmations of my Love and Dishonour, should you survive the Danger you are so desirous to confront.

L E T T E R X X I.

ST. *Far* *** inform'd me that you had engaged in a Duel with C*** and I was in the utmost Consternation when I received your Letter. But why did you not come yourself, to acquaint me with the Particulars ? Alas ! are you wounded ? But if you are not, what are the Apprehensions you entertain ? Why do you withdraw yourself

self from me? Have you no Inclination to receive new Discoveries of my Passion from my Eyes, or have you any particular Reasons to be afraid to see me? You are under no Necessity of concealing yourself; the Brutality of your Enemy furnishes you with a sufficient Vindication; it preserves my Honour from all Misconstructions, and contributes to the Security of your Person. But what do I say! You secret yourself on my Account, and I am the only Person whom you have not vouchsafed to see: Every Circumstance, which relates to myself, throws you into Confusion; my Tenderness grows incommodious to you: Ungrateful Man! you are desirous of my Aversion, and are indefatigable to deserve it! But you have habituated my Heart to love you; and, in spite of all your Contempt, it will never refuse you any thing but the Aversion you would compel it to express. If I may believe what I heard from St. *Far* *** you are extremely jealous. You are afraid to behold my Eyes bathed in Tears, because you are resolved to attribute them to the Misfortune of your Rival. You yourself, if I can judge of your Disposition by the Air of your Letter, seem desirous to insult my Grief, and you would not have informed me of your Success, with so much Ostentation, if you had not been persuaded that I should be mortified at

fo

so many Particulars in your Favour. Is it possible, then, that you can never afford me any Satisfaction, without blending it with the greatest Disquietude? Can you imagine, that if I had loved your Adversary, I would ever have sacrificed him to your Resentment? Had I any Intention to change you for another, would not your Indifference furnish me with as specious a Pretence as I could well desire? If I had not entertained the most tender Passion for you, could I ever be apprehensive of your Displeasure, or suffer myself to be affected at the Contempt with which you treat me? Ah! my Lord, you are but little acquainted with the Power of Love; and my Heart, tho' it has less Experience than yours, could furnish you with many Instructions on that Subject. It could acquaint you, at least, that Constraint has no Influence over Love; and that Negligence and a capricious Turn of Mind, instead of increasing that Passion, only create Dissatisfactions and Coldness between Lovers, and at last render their Disunion absolutely necessary. These are the Sentiments which I daily derive from your Conduct. I make no Difficulty to acknowledge that I love you; but I find it very disagreeable to be perpetually finding new Reasons to oppose my Passion. It may perhaps grow languid; and should I once disengage

engage my Heart from your Possession, all your Tears and Remorse will never regain it; and you will then be convinced that you never knew its Value, till you had lost it for ever. Think of this, my Lord, while it is in your Power to prevent the Increase of my Resentment; I offer you a Pardon, which, as yet, I am in a Condition to bestow, and which you may possibly not be able to obtain to-morrow. When I began this Letter, I did not imagine, that I should finish it in a Strain so disagreeable both to you and my self; but if you were as weary of deserving my Reproaches as I am of making them, we should soon settle the Affair, either for Love or Indifference.

L E T T E R X X I I .

THE penfive Air which my Husband assumed yesterday, alarm'd me not a little; I was apprehensive, that you were the Object of his Inquietude, and that he resented your Assiduities, which, I confess, have been too apparent to many. His Behaviour, by degrees, eased me of my Fears; and, since he has made Choice of you for his Confident, I suppose he has no Suspensions to your Disadvantage. I guessed by his Discomposeure, that he had entertained

certain'd some new Passion ; for I am not
 so happy as to be the Subject of his Me-
 ditations, in any Form whatever. I con-
 clude, therefore, that he is in Love with
 your Cousin, and entrusts you with the
 Care of making his Sighs acceptable. The
 Timidity he discovers, makes it evident,
 that his Sufferings are very severe, and he
 undoubtedly reserves for your Cousin, the
 Pleasure of making the first Overtures. She
 is not so cruel as to intimidate a Gentle-
 man from confessing, that he loves her ; and
 his Lordship is not of such a Nature as to
 give her any Uneasiness. He desires no-
 thing more than her Permission to be accep-
 table ; and I would not answer for his Pas-
 sion, should he continue three Days in a
 State of Incertainty. Be so good as to in-
 form your Cousin of these Particulars, that
 she may dispose herself to give him a Re-
 ception accordingly. But what will be-
 come of poor little D**** ? How will
 R**** behave ? and, in short, what will
 be the Condition of the whole Court ?
 What a Number of unhappy Ladies shall
 we soon behold ! It will be impossible to
 preserve every individual ! The Marquis is
 extremely incommodious to his Rivals, and
 especially for the first few Days. Can you
 think the Lady capable of refusing him the
 Satisfaction of being perfidious for one
 Week ?

Week? His Passion must have no Competitor, during that time at least. However, employ your good Offices for my Husband, whatever may be the Event. Give your Cousin a full Idea of the Flame that consumes him, and present to her View, the melancholy Portrait of a Man, who, for the Space of two Days, has been overwhelmed with sad Reflections. Tell her, 'tis of great Consequence not to let him sigh for any Length of Time, and that the least Chagrin entirely disconcerts him. Make her sensible of the Disadvantage of losing time; extol the amiable Qualities of the Marquis, and pass over the Article of his Constancy as lightly as possible, lest the Lady should be terrified. Give her a View of all her Lovers in a despairing Condition; some of them banishing themselves to their Estates; others in a vain Pursuit of Remedies, to mitigate the Pangs they sustain from her Inconstancy, and reduced, amidst the Ardours of a new Passion, to wish for the Re-enjoyment of her Heart with all its Perfidy. On the other hand, be sure to enforce to her, the grateful Disposition of my Husband, and enhance the Affiduities of a new Lover. Count all the Moments, that compose the Day; and assure her, that the Maquis will not leave her one to regret. In a word, remember every Circumstance, that may
incline

incline her to be favourable to him. You may possibly think it extraordinary in me to charge you with the Transaction of this Affair ; but, to deal seriously with you, my Husband's Indolence fills me with Apprehensions : He never deviates into Fondness for me, but when he is at a Loss how to bestow his Time ; it is therefore incumbent on you, since you love me, to prevent the Mortifications you will suffer by the Revival of his Passion for me. I don't know whether I ought to make you such a Declaration ; and you perhaps may be desirous, that he should relapse into his former Endearments to me : You may wish to see him jealous, because you would not then have such frequent Opportunities of seeing me ; or you may hope, perhaps, that the Constraint I should then suffer from him, would incline me to grant you those Favours, which you have never been able to obtain from my Passion. I think I have discovered in you, some Inclination of this Nature ; but such Sentiments are very indelicate, and should you not be disappointed in that View, you would owe the Obligation to the Marquis, and not to me. Adieu, my Lord ; I cannot imagine, why I am so much in Love with you to-day ; I have thought my Severities to you a little unreasonable, and was in the utmost Consternation,

I

sternation,

sternation, lest your Despair should be fatal to you : In a word, I was a little ridiculous ; what Pity is it, that - - - - - Good Morrow.

B I L L E T.

I cannot possibly make you any Promise. The Assignment you propose to me, seems to have too dangerous an Aspect. As yet, I have not been observed ; but were I to act with less Caution for the future, I should infallibly expose my self to some unpleasing Discovery of my Indiscretion. Let us not run the Hazard of losing, by a Moment's Folly, all the Liberty we have acquired by long Circumspection. Besides, I can comprehend what it is you would desire of me ; I very well recollect those Instances of my Weakness, which I gave you Yesterday, and you may possibly be desirous of improving them to your Advantage. Upon the whole, I find it improper for me to grant your Request ; but if you are disposed to pay me a Visit this Evening, you will find me at Home ; but I shall not be alone. I love you, and should be afraid of bestowing more time in convincing you of my Passion than I employ in confessing it.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIII.

NO more Fallings out, my Lord, I intreat you ; they cost me too dear in Reconciliations ; and if we have one Disagreement more, I will not pretend to answer for the Effects of my Resentment. Ungenerous Man ! I believe you give me so much Inquietude, with no other View but to render me more conformable to your Desires than I already am. This is an admirable Method of endearing one's self, I must confess : I can see by every Instance of your Conduct, that the tender Joys of the Heart, and all its soft Overflowings, are not so engaging to you as the less delicate Satisfaction that flow from Love. I am at a Loss how to declare my Meaning ; but am perswaded you understand me much better than I express myself. I am apt to smile, when I think on your impatient Desires, and my steady Resistance ; which has been such, as ought to convince you that I think it absolutely necessary for us to continue just as we are at present. I believe many Women, in my Situation, would have yielded to your Importunities, and alledg'd the Fatigue of a long Conflict, to justify their Compliance. Without doubt they would be so good to themselves,

as to think this a constant Vindication against the Reproaches of their own Hearts; But I happen to be so peculiar in my Way of thinking, as to believe a Woman may have as much Power as she pleases, on such an Occasion; and you may judge of mine, by the Disposition I have discover'd. Do you know that *Lucretia* takes up all my Thoughts, at present? She, indeed, had one Advantage over me, for she never loved *Tarquin*: But if I can be capable of resisting your Prayers, and Tears, and Caresses, with so much Resolution: If I, who adore you, and am conscious of your charming Power, can still oppose your Passion, with so much Insensibility, it must be granted, that all the Efforts of that Lady are infinitely surpass'd by mine. I pardon all your past Indiscretions; but let me intreat you to leave me, for the future, to my Repose. Tho' my Virtue is refin'd from all Frailty, and shines in its purest Lustre when it sustains the severest Assaults; yet let me conjure you, not to expose it any more, to the Dangers that surrounded it at our last Interview. Women, alas! are weak and irresolute: The Moment you parted from me yesterday, I found myself in a most detestable ill Humour; and as I was endeavouring to compose myself to slumber, the Marquis came, booted and half breathless, into my

my Apartment : His first Expression to me was, that he was horribly fatigued : The next Moment he was pleased to think me amiable ; and as he never vouchsafes to consult me in his Inclinations, he was disposed to pass that Night in my Bed, and acquainted me with his amorous Intentions, more like a Lover than a Husband. For my part, I don't know what might have been the Consequence, if I had not, with some Abruptness, desired him to retire to his own Apartment. I was so fatigued at that Time, and so disgusted at all Mankind, that I believe I should have prevail'd on myself to beat him, if he had persisted in his Design. It would have been a very singular Caprice indeed, if I had granted a Husband the very Favour I denied my Lover. Adieu. I give you an Invitation to dine with us ; but remember to be very circumspect. The Marquis thinks me the most insensible of all my Sex, and derives from this Idea, all the Repose he enjoys. Be very careful then not to undeceive him ; and rest perswaded, that he himself will furnish us with frequent Opportunities of seeing each other, with all the Liberty we can reasonably desire : And who can tell, whether I shall always be disposed to use it as I did yesterday ? I begin to be sensible that his Presence will oblige me to play off some strange Piece of Re-

venge upon him. A Husband would be too happy, if he could make his Wife believe, that he was no longer in the World.

L E T T E R XXIV.

I Acknowledge myself to be jealous ; and the Explanation I received from you yesterday, is so far from easing me of my Suspicions, that it has only contributed to increase them. You had the Presumption to introduce my Rival to me.——Barbarous Woman as she is ! With what an Infincerity of Softness did she desire a Share in my Friendship ! How artfully did she make you the Subject of her Conversation with me ! I had not Penetration enough, even to be diffident of her Integrity : I was delighted beyond Expression, to hear her expatiate in your Praise ; and whilst I imagined her Language was a secret Congratulation of my Choice, she was endeavouring, by my Replies, to confirm herself in her own.

How detestable is so mean an Artifice ! and how odious to my Thoughts do you now appear ! Perfidious Man ! how effectually does my Heart, by its fix'd Aversion to you, avenge itself on the fond Passion it entertain'd for you with so much Credulity !

I might

I might possibly have remained in my Error, if your Eyes had not been officious enough to undeceive me ; but, it seems, I am so little in your Esteem, that you can't vouchsafe to delude me with the least Dexterity. You imagine, I am so infatuated by my Passion for you, as to be incapable of discovering the ungenerous Cruelty that gives me such a mortal Wound : But Love is never destitute of Penetration, when it warms the Heart with the Ardours I have experienced. As it has been familiar to me to be belov'd ; and as I have accustom'd myself to reflect, with Pleasure, on the dear Instances of your past Tenderneſs ; how could you think it possible for me to be insensible of your Neglect and Aversion ? Will you now attempt to dissipate my Suspicions, by telling me they are created by Caprice ? Can you deny that you have pass'd those Days with her, which you refused to me ? When you, yesterday, replied to my Reproaches, your Eyes were constantly fix'd on my Rival ; and you seem'd to intreat her Pardon, for the Trouble you gave yourself in justifying your Conduct to me. You would have blush'd to have told any one but my self, that you fear'd you was entertaining a Passion, which would be, for ever, ineffectual : You introduced, in your Justification, a Comparison between that Lady
and

and my self; but sigh'd at the Necessity which oblig'd you to represent her in a Portrait you imagined to be injurious; and your secret Thoughts, undoubtedly, restor'd her all the Charms which your treacherous Lips had denied her. But were she, in reality, as much my Inferior, as you would incline me to suppose; can you think that Circumstance would ever lessen my Disbelief of your Indifference to her; and would not the Inconstancy of your Disposition be sufficient to make me apprehensive of every thing that could be fatal to my Repose? I have repeated it to you a thousand times, that my Fears are perpetual. Had I all the Charms you are pleased to allow me; and were I ordain'd to be the only Companion of your solitary Days, in the most sequestred Part of the Universe, I should not be reliev'd from my Suspicions of your Inconstancy. You may remember the Time, when I was in no little Danger of losing you, because the Princess *** rallied you with a sprightly Severity of Wit, which your Vanity was so absurd as to impute to a fond Passion you supposed she entertained for you; and can I possibly forget that I was never favour'd with one Visit from you, till you had lost all Hopes of being agreeable to her? Happy would it have been for me, had I never known any other In-

stance

stance of your Perfidy ! But not to enter upon your pass'd Conduct, make it your Endeavour to convince me, that the Joy which inspired you yesterday, at Play, had me for its Object. Recollect the cold Conversation with which you entertain'd me, and the inanimate Glances of your Eyes, that testified the Constraint with which you beheld me : Call to your Remembrance the Frequency of those Sighs, which were more owing to your Mortification in being so distant from my Rival, than to any Satisfaction you enjoyed at my Presence. Never tell me, that you was obliged to dissemble a tender Regard for her, that you might the better conceal your real Passion for me, from the Observation of the Company. Love pierces through all the Disguise of Constraint ; a transient Look, or even the least Gesture, is more perswasive on those Occasions, than all the eloquent Premeditation of Language. Besides, this would be a ridiculous Excuse for you to offer. When you really loved me, you acted with less Circumspection ; and whatever Pain it gave me, to moderate the Vivacity of your Ardours, I would have pardon'd you a thousand Indiscretions, much sooner than I can forgive so much Insensibility : Yet I have seen you — Ingrate ! I cannot think on the Particulars without Indignation, Adieu.

I blush

I blush to consider I have lost so much Time in lamenting my Fate. Be sure to absent yourself from me, for ever : Return me my Picture, and all my Letters ; for it would not be decent in you, to detain from me those Testimonies of my Weakness ; and you can have no Reason, at present, to hesitate in your Compliance with my Request. Let me fortify my Heart against you, and even against myself ; you shall no more triumph over my unhappy Frailty ; and, if I must needs devote some Tears to your Loss, I will at least preserve myself from the Mortification of weeping in your Presence.

L E T T E R X X V .

NO, my Lord, my Resolution is fix'd, and I am determin'd to see you no more. All your Expostulations will be unavailing, and you are too indifferent to me, at present, to create, in me, the least Desire of any Justification you can offer. Your Apprehensions of my Hatred are ill founded: You are not the Object of that uneasy Passion in me ; but I must acquaint you, at the same time, that all my Tenderness is entirely extinguished. You may rest assured, that our Hatred, on these Occasions,

casions, is proportionable to our Love ; and,
 that you may be satisfied of my Sincerity
 in this Particular, I only promise you the
 whole Stock of my Indifference. You may
 make what Remarks you please upon this
 Declaration ; I am but too well avenged,
 if you really continue to love me. It cer-
 tainly must be very disagreeable to sigh,
 without the least grateful Return ; but as
 you are so extremely amiable, I may sup-
 pose this to be a Misfortune you have never
 experienced. I take no Notice of your
 Change, because I consider it as the Effect
 of your Caprice ; and since you were pas-
 sionately fond of Lady *** a few Days ago,
 you may possibly be as much in Love with
 me to-day. As to my Heart, which you
 are pleased to demand, I must give you
 to understand, that it is no longer at my
 Disposal ; at least you may be very certain,
 it will never be your Property again. It
 will therefore be most for your Interest, to
 let all Affairs rest between us, as they are at
 present. Should I consent to a new Inter-
 course with you, it would only be with a
 View to deceive you, in my Turn : But
 this is a Satisfaction altogether unworthy of
 my Attention ; and, to be plain with you,
 I am determined never to love you more.
 Your Vanity must be extremely mortified,
 when you cast your Eyes on these melan-
 choly

choly Characters, form'd by the same Hand that has frequently writ to you in so contrary a Strain: But you have no Reason to be surprized at my Imitation of your own Example; and I should certainly have died with Grief, if my Inconstancy had not made it impossible for me to be sensible of yours. Let me advise you, then, to relieve me from your Sollicitations, which, instead of inspiring me with any Sentiments in your favour, will only degrade you in my Thoughts. You challenge me, in your Letter, to prove that you ever loved Lady***; but I am so little interested in your Conduct, that I shall never charge myself with that Province. You have my Consent to make her the happy Object of your Passion; treat her with all the Tenderness she merits, and be careful to preserve her from the Torments you have caused me to sustain. Make it evident, if possible, that you are worthy to possess so amiable a Conquest; and if you are no longer apprehensive of her Rigours, endeavour to secure yourself the Continuance of such uncommon Favours. You tell me, you will prepare for your Departure, if I intend to be inflexible; I can only say, that if you have formed such a Resolution, I wish you Abundance of Happiness and Satisfaction in your Travels.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXVI.

HOW irresistible is the Power of Love !
 I am convinced of your Guilt, and yet find myself compelled to pardon you ! How difficult is it to form an Aversion to the Person we adore ; and with what Pleasure are we inclined to believe him faithful, even when we have so many Reasons to be apprehensive of losing him for ever ! Take back my Heart I restore you ; and may the Possession of it be so instrumental to your Happiness, as to secure you from the Possibility of changing ! May the Warmth and Constancy of your Passion, prevent me from hating you for the future ! I am willing to suppose I was deceived, when I imagined you had devoted your Inclinations to another Object ; and it will not be my Fault, if I do not soon present you with a more pleasing Confession of my Mistake. I am not desirous to torment myself ; but tho' my Heart is incapable of the least Tincture of Caprice, it is not entirely exempted from Suspicions. Every Circumstance of your Conduct allarms the Delicacy of my Love, and a single Glance directed to another Object, calls up a thousand extravagant Imaginations in my Soul. The fatal Loss of your Heart seems to me inevitable,

K

ble, in the Agony of that Moment, and the Idea of your Indifference condemns me to Inquietudes I am incapable of sustaining. Can you believe, that the Ardours of my Passion are abated; and, if I did not love you, even to Madness it self, could I possibly be affected with your Behaviour? Alas! there are some Instances of it, which, as innocent as they may appear to you, never fail to overwhelm me with Despair! How can your Manner of thinking be different from mine! And since I am always sedulous to please you, why do you deny me a suitable Return! Did you intend, by your affected Cruelty, to kill me with inconsolable Sorrow! Have you any Cause to ridicule those Sentiments in my Soul, which your Indifference, your Inconstancy, and even your Aversion it self, had no Power to extinguish? Was there any Necessity for your deluding me with the Apprehensions of a Rival? and if your Passion had the least Similitude to mine, could you possibly constrain your Eyes to afford her one favourable Regard? Are you then such an absolute Master of your Heart, as to be capable of acting such a Part as this? Ah! never give me Cause to entertain such an Opinion; your Inconstancy would be less tormenting to me, than your Perjury in pretending a Passion for me which you never experienced.

perienced. But how shall I be fatisfied that you have no Inclination to change? You, indeed, are pleas'd to give me such an Assurance; but is that fufficient to convince me of your Sincerity? The Agitations of my Soul, at the Remembrance of the Dangers I have sustain'd, and my perpetual Fears of repeating them, compel me to entertain a secret Distrust of all your Proteftations; and caufe me to reproach my own inconfiderate Credulity. I am even fenfible, tho' I acknowledge it with Reluctance, that my Diffidence of your Integrity, has oblig'd me to confider you with a Coldnefs to which I was formerly a Stranger; and I find it very difficult for me to believe you as innocent as you represent yourfelf. I fhould rejoice to be perfwaded that your Penitence and Remorfe were fincere; but the Remembrance of your paft Conduct, and my Apprehenfions of the Pangs I may yet be fated to endure, entirely chill me for the prefent; and I ftand in need of very good Reafons, to revive a Paffion for you, as ardent as that which I have formerly experienced. I even force my Imagination to represent you in an amiable Idea, and figh to find myfelf fo different from what I have lately been. I am fenfible that I have loft thofe tender Sollicitudes and foft Defires, which were once my delightful En-

tainment, and needed not the Aid of sedate Reflections, to form the Happiness I then enjoy'd. Had you deferr'd your Vindication a little longer, I should certainly have loved you no more. How well does the Sincerity of this Confession represent to you, the Importance of such a Resolution to my Repose! Do not imagine, however, that I shall be incapable of Satisfaction, when you shall think fit to revisit me: For tho' my Passion may have some Abatement, I am still convinced that I love you infinitely more than you are able to conceive. How happy would you render me, were your insensible Soul but warm'd with part of the Flames that are kindled in mine! I suppose I need not enjoin you to see Lady * * * no more; however, let your Heart inform you, whether such a Deprivation will cost you dear, and give me no Occasion to believe, that you are making a Sacrifice in my favour, with Reluctance, when you cease to behold her. Adieu.

The Moment I concluded my Letter, the Marquis came into my Closet, upon a very singular Occasion; for, after he had told me that he was going to *Versailles*, he asked me, why I did not see you as usual; and observing me in some Confusion at that Question; Madam, says he, with a very serious Air, you grow more capricious every Day,

Day, and it should seem as if you delighted to play off your fanciful Airs upon my Friends ; the Count is one, for whom I have a particular Esteem, and you will oblige me, by granting him the Pardon he desires to obtain: Not that he is guilty in any Instance, but he is too polite to remind you of your Incivilities. I must desire you, therefore, to conduct yourself in such a manner, that I may see him here, at my Return, with his usual Air of Satisfaction, or else you must permit me to think you accountable for any Discontent he may happen to discover. But who, said I, has acquainted your Lordship that we have had any Variance? He himself, replied the Marquis ; but I desire you not to treat him ill, for I had all the Difficulty in the World to extort this Mystery from him. But whatever the Affair may be, I must insist upon your granting him a favourable Reception, or else I assure you, that I myself will introduce him to you, every Day, for your Punishment. These Women, continued he, as he was retiring, can never live in Peace with People. I am much obliged to you, my Lord, for providing yourself with such an Intercessor ; your Proceeding is very singular, I must confess: But if I had not a natural Disposition to love you, I can assure you that you would have derived very

little Advantage from his Recommendation. I am ready to die with laughing, at his Zeal for his Friend; but must you not confess, that it would be pity to deceive him?

L E T T E R XXVII.

YOU complain of my Indifference, and are at a loss to comprehend how it is possible for me, amidst the Flow of your softest Transports, to be insensible of that Emotion which they naturally ought to create in my Soul. I have been affected with this Emotion for some time, and am not a little concerned that I should begin to lose the Conception of it now. You infer, from my pretended Insensibility, that the Ardours of your Passion are superior to mine: You are very liberal of your Reproaches; and having no Idea of any Pleasures in Love, but such as are imparted by the Senses, you consider those refin'd Impressions, which inspire the Soul with Joys, much more exquisite and delicate than the Delights which are the sole Objects of your Desires; I say, you consider them as so many Chimeras and Illusions. Ah! how is it possible for you to be unacquainted with them; and why am I, with all my Penetration, so incapable of describing them?

Were

Were I less sensible of their Power, I should certainly explain them with more Perspicuity. You charge me with Indifference; alas! why can I not comply with the Importance of your Desires, without a Crime! The warmest Glow of your tender Transports would be cold and languishing, if compared to mine, and I should soon cause you to blush, for believing my Passion less violent than yours. Am I, then, without Desires? Can you imagine me exempted from their tormenting Impressions; and is not my Soul agitated with Disorders that have no Intermision? As my Happiness is much inferior to yours, am I not necessitated to conceal my Sentiments from you; and can I possibly resign myself to their Impulse, without offending the Severity of that Virtue, whose Aid, weak as it is, has hitherto preserved me from the Loss of your Esteem, and the insupportable Forfeiture of your Heart? Were it not for this fatal Certainty — Ah me! into what Extreams would my Emotions betray me, had I no Subject for my Letter but this! How many Expressions have escaped me, which are injurious to my Virtue, and unsatisfactory to you, who perhaps may consider my Deviation from Reason as a Circumstance that ought to be disregarded? Why have I not the Power to erase these Confessions,

for

for which I so justly reproach myself! But you will surely be too generous to improve them to my Disadvantages. Had it not been for *Dupré*, who waits with Impatience in my Chamber, and would be unwilling to allow me sufficient Time to write another Letter, I should have preserved myself from the Mortification of so many Follies. Lay no Strefs upon them, I intreat you. Will you believe me, when I assure you, that I shall be more ready to disown them than I was to commit them to Writing? Adieu.

I am almost tortur'd to Distraction: My Mother commands me to accompany her, I know not where; and I must be banish'd, the whole Day, from your Sight! It was to no purpose for me to tell her I was indisposed; she is positive that Health itself smiles in my Countenance. It will be impossible for me to see you. Ah me! what Mortifications am I now to endure!

B I L L E T.

I know not whether I do well to acquaint you that I am at this time alone: But I find myself discomposed, and have an Inclination to see you. Perhaps I ought not to be desirous of a Visit from you, after the fine Descriptions of myself, which you have received from

from the Marquis. I am obliged to him, for commending me with so much Zeal; and if he is pleased with the Merit he allows me, you may judge how agreeable it ought to be to the Man I love, and who alone is the Object of all my Transports. A Husband can only behold a breathing Statue; 'tis the Lover alone for whom the Soul is form'd. I am not at all doubtful of the Pleasure you will receive, in verifying his Discourse. But however that may be, I shall not be favour'd with his Company at Dinner; and should you be disposed to fill the Place he is pleased to leave vacant, I am not sensible that your Civility will expose you to any Censure. I could have engaged some of my own Sex, had not I believed your Presence would be more entertaining to me; for I am a mortal Enemy to all insipid Indolence. Be so obliging then, as to indulge me with your Company; and I promise you to do all I can, to render mine as agreeable to you as possible. Heaven grant, that the Sight of me may be all the Satisfaction you desire me to grant you.

LET-

L E T T E R XXVIII.

YES, my Lord, I confess that if my Husband's Arrival yesterday was very seasonable for himself, it happened to be perfectly inconsistent with your Intentions: My irresolute Virtue made but a weak Defence, and your impatient Ardours had almost surprized me into an absolute Insensibility of my Duty. The ensnaring Opportunity, the Promptitude of your Passion, and the Conformity of mine; in short, every Circumstance conspired against me, and I was sensible, in that Moment, of Impressions I had never experienced till then. My Eyes, when they were even fixed upon you, were incapable of beholding you: I was reduc'd to that State of Stupidity, in which we resign ourselves to every Freedom your Sex is pleased to attempt; and my Thoughts were disorder'd by an Intoxication, more easy to be conceived than express'd: What then would have been my Condition, had not the Marquis arrived at that Instant! I have protracted the Loss of you one Day longer, by not gratifying your Desires: But, shall I always have that Resolution? Yes surely; for the Situation in which I then beheld myself, as infatuating as it appear'd to my Senses, and as enchanting as it can possibly prove, is too dange-

rous

zous. ever to leave me the least Inclination to
 repeat it. I am sensible you never expected
 such a Conclusion as then happen'd ; and per-
 haps you may imagine, that my Impatience
 to accomplish what Chance interrupted, is
 equal to yours ; but you injure me by that
 Suspicion. Is it possible that in those cruel
 Moments, when Nature resigns us to our-
 selves ; when all the Scenes, wrought into
 Enthusiasm, conspire to seduce us ; when
 our Transports are kindled, without Inter-
 mission, by those which rise in the Lover,
 and insinuate the Idea of thrilling Joys into
 the Imagination ; is it possible, I say, that
 we can desire such a delicious Frenzy to be
 defeated ? It is, my Lord, and I can dare
 to avow it : A Resignation to the warm De-
 sires of a Lover, after we have been a-
 waken'd from that fatal Disposition I have
 experienc'd, and a soft Indulgence to his Hap-
 piness, because our Frailty was once inclinable
 to grant it ; is a Weakness, of which I have
 no Conception. In consequence of these Re-
 flections, I shall never consent to another
 Interview ; for I am no longer misguided
 by my former Indiscretions. You will be
 displeas'd at this Resolution ; and perhaps I
 may not find all the Satisfaction in it that I
 could wish : But I shall never act in any
 other manner. Could I be certain, indeed,
 that we should be again interrupted by my
 Hus-

Husband, I might dispose myself to receive you; for, without him, my Virtue is very imperfect. This dear Marquis! With what Gratitude have I embrac'd him! He was at a loss to account for my Caresses; and as all his Fondness is devoted to your fair Relation, he received my obliging Tenderness with such an Air of Dissatisfaction and Constraint, as would have diverted you extremely. I yesterday imagined, when he first made his Appearance, that Husbands have some particular Presages which inform them of what is transacted in their Absence: But they are daily giving us so many Proofs to the contrary, that it was impossible for me to continue long in that Persuasion.

Surely yesterday was very fortunate to Husbands. The Satisfaction my Escape from you afforded me, animated my Features with so much Vivacity, and diffused such engaging Graces over all my Person, that you would have died with mere Love, had you beheld me in that amiable State. I shall certainly indulge a little Cruelty for the future; and does not your Lordship discover a very formidable Aspect in so much Virtue? What will you say then, when I assure you, that it is preparing to be more untractable than ever? But I am constrained to be imperious, since my Compliances

pliances are inconsistent with my Honour. You had an Inclination to improve my Frailty to your Advantage, and I ought not to pardon that ungenerous Intention. Ah this Virtue, Count! Have these who practise it, any Sensibility of Love? I begin to be fortified by that Thought: There are, possibly, some Cases that may be excepted, but it would be dishonourable to derive any improper Advantage from them. You see the Perplexity in which I am involved; your Lordship in one Scale, and Virtue in the other: How difficult is it to adjust the Ballance! But that I may be able to keep it even, I must intreat you never to see me for the future, unless it be at a distance, or in publick; and if you are dissatisfied at this Request, you must amuse yourself with your own Desires. I grant you this Permission, till you receive new Orders from me. Adieu.

B I L L E T.

Ah! my poor Count! sleep in the Name of Heaven! Sleep, I say, that you may, at least, have the Enjoyment of pleasing Dreams. Let these agreeable Illusions recompense you for all the Mortifications you have suffered by my Rigours. Alas! you are in such a Condition at present, that I

L am

am fearful of granting you the most considerable Favour, lest I should be obliged to repeat it. Don Quixot, when he left the Black Mountain, was not half so emaciated as yourself. What would you have one do with so dejected a Lover? Resume your florid Complexion: I permitted you to be indisposed, when you was desirous of my Compassion; but why should you now recur to that unnecessary Expedient? I intend to be at the Opera, this Evening, where you may enjoy the Pleasure of beholding me. You may think an Assignment, at such a Place, something extraordinary, if you were not very sensible that we are never to have any in private. However, be there betimes.

B I L L E T.

*I happen'd to sigh at the Opera, at one Word you utter'd, and my Eyes corresponded with that Sigh: I imagined you understood me, since you were pleased to tender me your Acknowledgments with so much Civility; and yet you have desired me, this Morning, to favour you with an Explanation. All that I can say to you, at present, will not convey to you the Sense of what I said then. The Language of the Lips does not always imitate the Sentiments of the Heart; and
perhaps*

(III)

perhaps mine no longer preserves the Disposition in which you found it yesterday ; or at least I would flatter myself to that effect. You desire to know if I am disposed to see Company ; I have almost an Inclination to say, No : But you have too much Merit to suffer me to impose upon you. You would willingly be informed, if I shall be alone ; I can easily tell you that I shall : But, will you draw no Conclusions from that Confession ?

[Some Letters are here suppress'd.]

L E T T E R XXIX.

AS much Love as you please, but a little more Discretion, or I am undone. You threw me into so much Perplexity, yesterday, with your Impatience ; and such an Air of Emotion was visible in your Eyes, that it was impossible the Company should not discover what is so much our Interest to conceal. Am I then so indifferent to you, that you can be content to lose me, for the sake of a Gratification, which would afford you so little Pleasure ? At what a fatal Time were we in danger

of being surprized! Is it possible that in the midst of publick Hurry——Ah! how I tremble at the Remembrance! Let me intreat you, if you really love me, never to expose me to so much Danger for the future. Have we not sufficient Time in the Day? How inconsiderate are you grown! Your Desires are never so ardent, as when their Accomplishment is impracticable. When I resign myself to your Tenderness, in those Places where we can sustain no Hazard, I always find you extremely calm and moderate. This is an Observation which has been forced upon me by your Follies; and I believe you are so just to me, as not to charge me with any yielding Frailties. At the same time I declare, that I am not insensible, but my Heart is more favourable to me than yours; and that which constitutes my Happiness, would be an insupportable Coldness, in your Opinion. You have no Comprehension of any thing beyond your Desires, and are unacquainted with those delicate Anxieties that affect a Heart capable of Sensibility; nor have you any Idea of Love itself, but what I wish to be ignorant of for ever. I, without doubt, address myself to you in a Strain to which you have been little accustomed. Your Heart torments you with no Reproaches, and you discover to me, without

out th
is cap
tage
woul
Dexte
lation
could
cess.
ducte
is just
quain
Inter
Acti
tions
all th
and
you
com
you
it lo
Wh
verf
time
Ind
leas
low
for
I d
and
fary
not

out the least Disguise, every Emotion that is capable of affecting it. All the Advantage I should derive from my Complaints, would be, to find myself deceived with more Dexterity for the future: But my Expostulations would not be so frequent, if you could impose upon others with more Success. Can you imagine, that you have conducted yourself with all the Discretion that is justly my due, tho' you had never acquainted any one with the Nature of our Intercourse? Can you be ignorant, that our Actions are the most expressive Declarations of our Thoughts? Would you have all the World suspect your Passion for me; and are you desirous they should believe you want nothing to render your Happiness compleat; or is this so immoderate, that you cannot possibly sustain it; and would it lose its Estimation by being unknown? Why do you affect to be perpetually conversing with me in Whispers, at the same time that you are committing a thousand Indiscretions? Why is my Reputation the least Part of your Care? If you would allow yourself, however, but a short Space for Reflection, you would be sensible that I deserve to be treated with more Decency; and that such a Conduct is absolutely necessary to my Repose. Let me advise you not to depend on my Husband's Indolence;

you have all imaginable Reason to be apprehensive of his Resentment, should he once entertain any Suspicion of my Weakness. Let us be seen together, in publick, as little as possible. I am extremely apprehensive of your Imprudence, and all your Probity is incapable of reconciling me to your Transports. I even dread my own, and am conscious that my Eyes distinguish you from other Men, by a very visible Preference. How shall I conceal those Emotions that agitate my Soul, the Moment I behold you! Let us habituate ourselves to a little Constraint, for our own Security; a single Word that we imagine to be of no Consequence; a transient Glance; a mere Preference; in short, every Circumstance of this Nature, is always explained by the World, in a very disadvantageous manner. What a Number of People are there, who make Detraction their constant Employment; and if Calumny is levell'd at so many Persons, ought we not to be apprehensive of its malignant Effects? Let me intreat you to think the greatest Proof you can give me of your Passion, will be your Sollicitude to conceal it. Can you persuade yourself that soft Desires are essential to no Heart but yours; and do you think I offer no Violence to my own Inclinations? But since I am capable

of

of opposing them, why cannot you exert yourself with the same Success? You ought to blush, when you consider that you have less Presence of Mind than myself. Adieu. You desire to see me, and I am unwilling to grant you that Request: But, however, you may come, if you are so disposed; I shall not be under the Inspection either of Friends or Enemies; and as Vanity is to be the Motive of my Contest with you, your Valour may prove very inconsiderable for want of Spectators. Let me enjoy your Company at Dinner; I never was so amiable and unthinking as I am at present. How sincerely do I pity you!

L E T T E R X X X .

YOU have disgusted me a little, but I am very glad you writ to me, because the Formality of an Answer gives me a favourable Opportunity of acquainting you with what I had to say. To make a regular Beginning, then, I must inform you, in the first place, that your Apprehensions are altogether extravagant; and, to convince you that I think so, I have resolved not to favour you with one Syllable of Love, or the least Assurance of Fidelity, either for the Time present, or that which is to come.

I am

I am not dissatisfied that I have created you a few Suspicions ; but all that I can do for you, is to proceed in my usual Track, and, if after this you are disposed to be incommodious, all the Detriment will be your own. We will now proceed to other Particulars.

You are sensible that my Husband fancied himself indisposed yesterday ; and, as the Care of his Health is the most important Pleasure he enjoys, I had some Reason to imagine he would confine himself to his Apartment, for the Remainder of the Week. This Circumstance would have subjected us to some Constraint ; but he has been pleased to change his Opinion. He awaked this Morning with a very promising Complexion, and some Vivacity in his Eyes ; after which he came into my Apartment, with a most deplorable Air, to have my Sentiments of his Countenance. It appear'd to me just as it was ; by which I mean, that it was something better than mine. He received my Congratulations for his Recovery, and I assured him, that what he mistook for an Indisposition, was only the Effect of a Discomposure which had diffused itself over all his Charms, and shaded part of their Lustre. He disputed my Opinion, which obliged me to conduct him to my Glass, in my own Vindication. He smiled

when

when he surveyed himself, and immediately gave me to understand, that he was sensible he grew better. This Discovery brightned his Melancholy into so much good Humour, that he continued a considerable time at my Toilet, and became the most amiable and gallant Man in the World. I was almost tempted to be a Supplicant for the Continuance of his tender Regards for me; but I am inclined to think my Petition would have been rejected: For he left my Chamber, and I accompanied him to his own Apartment, where he dress'd himself with all the Coquetry of a Woman who expects a favour'd Lover. I did not fail to expatiate on the Graces of his Person, and even assisted him in the Adjustment of his Habit: In short, I so frequently assured him that he was perfectly charming, that he was determined to visit your Cousin, with whom he pass'd the Remainder of the Day. For my part, I found myself in a Disposition to employ the Time he left upon my Hands, to the best Advantage, in spite of your ill Humour; and at last persuaded myself, that I should have some Occasion for you, if I intended to enjoy a few agreeable Hours. But, with your Permission, we will have a little more Company to enliven us. I am apprehensive, that you will be displeased with so much Solitude,

tude, especially since you are so very little in love with me to-day : But whatever you may think of my Proceeding, I have not so much Complaisance for your Caprice, as to give myself any Uneasiness, when I can act much better. You may come, then, as soon as you please, for I was never more desirous of your Company.

L E T T E R XXXI.

THE Affairs which detain you at *Paris*, make you lose the most charming Month of the Year, in Perplexity and Discontent ; and your Absence deprives me of all the Pleasures I should enjoy in a Place which would seem delightful to me, could it possibly be graced with your Presence. Have your Thoughts any Similitude to mine ? Do you discover any Charms in *Paris*, when I am no longer there ; or do you look with Indifference on every Object around you ? Have you any Inclination to see me in that City ? Do you recollect that I sincerely love you ; and is that Remembrance capable of contributing to your Happiness, in the same Proportion as my Passion for you is the only Source of mine ? How exquisite would my Felicity prove, if amidst the Pleasures that present themselves

to

to your View, your Heart would confess that it was still destitute of some dear Enjoyment! Do you derive any Satisfaction from your Fidelity to me, and can you still love me with all the Extasies I experience for you? The Reality of Joy is only to be tasted in a Passion as ardent as mine. Moderation in Love, is a cold Discomposure of the Mind; but if your Letter transmits to me the Language of your Heart, I have no Cause to be discontented. In what a charming Warmth of Expression does it flow! I almost imagin'd, when I read it, that your Passion was paramount to mine; but is it possible for you to write with so much delicate Wit, amidst the Troubles that perplex you; and are you sincerely sensible of the Impressions you describe? You tell me, you are a Stranger to every Satisfaction; and I can assure you, that I have no happy Moments but those wherein you are the delightful Subject of my Meditations. How do I regret that Part of my Time, which I am under a Necessity of devoting to other Attentions! Will this cruel Absence admit of no Mitigation, but that which your Picture affords me! Dear to me as it is, the Solace I receive from it is very imperfect, when I think on the Original! Did you but know the incoherent Follies I utter to those lovely Traces of the Pencil!

Pencil! But, is my Portrait capable of finding you any Employment? Do you really need its Assistance to direct your Thoughts to me; and can you indeed be satisfied with its little Ministration in that Particular? Ah! how languid is the Passion you entertain for me! Is it just in you, to leave me in the melancholy Solitude to which I am abandoned; and ought you not to be sensible of all the Horrors of your own sequestred State? You may possibly make your Law-suit furnish you with a Pretext for not seeing me so frequently as you ought. The Aspect of your Proctor may be more agreeable to you than mine: But, have all the Suits in the World, any Competition with that which I can cause you to lose? I would resign all my other Expectations, for the Pleasure of beholding you in this Place. Shall I not be deluded in the Hopes you give me, of seeing you in four Days? Will the Court, and your own particular Affairs, permit you to be punctual to your Promise? I am now in a real State of Widowhood: My Husband is engaged in the same Place that detains you; and as his Return will not be speedy, ought you not to improve the Liberty you derive from his Absence. The perpetual Flutter of the City is disagreeable to Lovers; the Heart is always fetter'd by unpleasing De-

corums,

corums, and the perfect Enjoyment of one's self is only to be attained in the soft Calm of Solitude. Haste then, if it be only to experience whether my Cruelty be abated, or not : Let your Curiosity incline you to try, whether my Tendernefs for you can be increased by the Efficacy of your Prefence. I will at leaft acknowledge, that the verdant Beauties of Nature, and the filent Gloom of the Woods, lull me into a Train of Meditations, which have no other Object but yourfelf. Your charming Image riles before me in all my Slumbers : I then think you the moft amiable Swain in the World ; and fometimes the happieft of all your Sex. But alas ! thefe Delights are but unſubſtantial Dreams : Prepare then to blefs me, by your dear Return, with Joys that are real. Adieu, my Lord. You indulge yourfelf in Complaints ; but, can you tell me why ? Once more Adieu : Be fure to remember that I love you, and am doom'd to die with Anguiſh in your Abſence.

L E T T E R XXXII.

EIGHT Days are now elapſed, ſince your Departure ; eight fatal Days have I paſs'd in unſpeakable Inquietudes ; whiſt you, perhaps, have been unwilling to de-

M

vote

vote one Moment of this tedious Period to
 my Remembrance. You have writ me a
 Letter, I confess; and any one, but myself,
 would have thought it exquisitely tender:
 But, had you the Power to tell me, with
 any Tranquillity, that your Return will be
 retarded eight Days? Is it possible that so
 long an Absence should not seem as cruel
 to you, as it really is to me? Has my Heart,
 then, lost its Estimation in your Thoughts,
 because I have permitted it to be totally
 yours? The Vivacity of my Passion enables
 me to discover the languid Calm of yours.
 Ah! how unkind was it to leave me
 to the Anguish of my forlorn Solitude!
 The Moderation of your Desires discom-
 poses me without ceasing, and I am some-
 times tempted to wish you would sacrifice
 all other Obligations and Affairs to your Sol-
 licitude to revisit me: I even forget that I
 have injoin'd you to the contrary; but the
 Moment I recollect that Injunction, I am
 offended at the Punctuality of your Obe-
 dience. Why do you expose me to the In-
 consistency of such extravagant Thoughts?
 Do you find it so difficult to allot one Mo-
 ment to my Satisfaction; and shall Sleep in-
 gross that precious Time which is the Pro-
 perty of Love? You fill up all the Hours
 of my Life; and have I no Pretensions then
 to any of yours? Were you once sensible of
 the

the Disquietude I sustain ; did you but know how I am persecuted by rural Coxcombs, and tawdry Officers of the Revenue, I am sure you would pity my Condition. Your Absence is no way necessary, to give me a Disrelish for their Conversation ; no Circumstance in Nature can recommend their insipid Liveliness. Unhappily for me, they have already begun to torment me with so much Respect, that I am at a loss how to disengage myself from the Profusion of their Civilities. P*** has his House entirely filled with these amiable Gentlemen ; and it is so near mine, that I am besieged the whole Day, and especially by the young Triflers. They have such bewitching Airs, so smooth a Flow of Wit, and disburden themselves of their teeming Conceits with such a military Freedom of Thought, that were I not so much prepossess'd in your Favour as I am, I should certainly be undone, in spite of all my Virtue. What Infatuation and Imperitinnce am I exposed to ! 'Tis said, however, that these good People are very fortunate in their Amours : What a Reproach is this to my Sex ! I believe, their frequent Resorts to our provincial Courts of Law, have infected them with an Air of Stupidity that discovers itself, even in the best Strain of Liveliness they are capable of affecting. I have already received from these flimry

M 2

Teazers,

Teazers, no less than thirty Declarations of Love, each rising above the last in tender Expressions. You would be too much diverted were you to see them, in their Emulations to pay their Court to me at my Toilet. With what an amiable Set of little Creatures am I surrounded ! Virtue, in their Company, would be a ridiculous Superfluity, since a moderate Share of Taste suffices to guard one against all their Seducements. Had not *St. Far**** relieved me yesterday with a very seasonable Visit, I should certainly have been sick with mere Chagrin: But his agreeable Gaiety requites me for all the sleepy Civilities I am compelled to hear from my Lovers ; and I now think myself happy, since I have an Opportunity of making you the Subject of my Conversation with him. *P**** entertain'd me, last Night, with a Supper that compleated my ill Humour. My little Cluster of Fops were extremely facetious, and darted their Glances at me, in a most unmerciful manner: They even exhausted all their Invention to divert me ; and yet, you may reasonably believe, I pass'd the Time without a Moment's Satisfaction ; and indeed I must confess, that if my Thoughts of you had not supported me amidst these cold Amusements, I should have died with Vexation. Adieu ; but remember to return as soon as possible,

possi
Air,
that
teref
you
that
Cou
myse
Once
have
thing
your
foste
perh
perfe
whic

W
have
Inst
me
ple
sensi
in th
act
shev
you

possible, and dissipate, with your superiour Air, this fluttering Legion of Insignificants that besiege me. Believe me, it is your Interest to be very expeditious; and to induce you to that, is it necessary for me to tell you that I, this Moment, hear your Uncle's Cough? But however, I shall go and divert myself with making him seal my Letter. Once more Adieu, my dearest Count! I have no Time to acquaint you with any thing more; but you may represent me to your Imagination, entertaining you with the softest Language that Love can utter; and perhaps, even then, you will have but an imperfect Idea of the exquisite Impressions with which you have inspired me.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

WH O can possibly have told you that I want any of your Excuses? You have been pleased to favour me with a small Instance of your Inconstancy, which gives me no manner of Discontent: The Example is of your own proposing, and you are sensible how apt our Sex is to imitate yours in that Particular. You are afraid I shall act agreeably to the Precedent you have shewn me: It would have been Wisdom in you to have made that Reflection before;

but you first insult me, and are afterwards apprehensive of my Revenge. You and *St. Far**** were pleased, yesterday, to bring into the Country, a Party of Nymphs who sing in the Opera; and truly I can see nothing extraordinary in such a Proceeding, especially as I am certain you selected those of the most unblemish'd Virtue in the whole Band: And tho' it may be something difficult to make such a Choice, I yet refer myself, in that particular, to your delicate Taste and Penetration. Besides, no Law has ever made it a Crime to love Music; and, I believe, Harmony must needs be more affecting in the Calm of a Wood, than it can possibly be in the Confusion of a Theatre, amidst a troublesome Crowd of Spectators. But what if the whole Affair be quite otherwise, and that my Imagination, which was always solicitous to justify your Conduct, should, for once, give Things their worst Construction; what would be the Consequence? I should blush, could I possibly be jealous on such an Occasion: No, I can but make some Abatements of my former Constancy; but this, perhaps, is what you never suspected, and you might flatter yourself that your Indiscretion would never provoke me to form such a Resolution: But you may, possibly, be much deceived. There are Times when I find myself ex-

posed

posed to the prettiest Temptations in the World, and I am not displeased to have my Sensibility of their Power justified by your Example. I once prided myself in a Constancy, which could not fail to be incommodious to us both ; but I have intirely changed my Plan. When we are indulging the full Career of our Inclinations, if we should hereafter happen to relapse into a mutual Tenderneſs for each other ; we may then repeat our Interviews, without being ſeized with the Transports of a Paſſion in its infant Flame. Abſence, perhaps, may give us ſome little Regrets ; but we ſhall have no Jealouſies, no Expoſtulations or Caprice to experience. It will then be our happy Fate to be unacquainted with thoſe Delicacies that create ſuch an Inequality in Love. We may be mutual Confidants to each other ; and ſo amiable a Gentleman as yourſelf, muſt needs be capable of entertaining me with a Number of pleaſing Adventures. We may aſſiſt each other with our beſt Counſels, if it be poſſible for ſo inconfiderate a Perſon as yourſelf, to offer any that are material. Should you then happen to have been in any Adventure like that of yeſterday, I ſhall have the Friendſhip to tell you, that little Gaieties of that nature, degrade a Gentleman ; and that when he conſorts himſelf with Perſons of ſuch a

Clasſ,

Class, he is in some Danger of acting an ungraceful Part: That amidst a thousand Inconveniencies which attend such little Diversions, it must be very mortifying to his Vanity, when he sees himself on a Level with those good People whom such Ladies associate into their Pleasures. You may judge, by this Sketch of Morality, what improving Lectures I am preparing for your next Indiscretions. Heavens grant, that those you committed yesterday, may be your last! Adieu. You imagine I shall not be visible to-day; but you are really mistaken.

L E T T E R X X X I V .

I Am at a loss to know where all these Follies will end; but am persuaded, that from the Moment People first began to say tender Things to one another, there never was a more ridiculous Pair of Lovers than ourselves. Eight Days ago I was jealous; and were I to credit all I hear, I should have Reason to continue so still. To-day you are seized with the same Distemper, doubtless because you intend to copy after my Example; but I can assure you, I am not so compleat a Model as you may imagine. You are pleased to tell me that I am a Coquet, and it may possibly be

true.

true. You say I love to please ; but can
 you give me any Reason why I ought to
 renounce all Mankind? You will certainly
 be much surprized, when I declare that I
 act with Discretion, in the very Instances for
 which you reproach me ; and yet nothing
 can be more certain. I have observed ; for
 tho' I love you, I can observe sometimes ;
 and indeed I observe, because I love you :
 I say, I have observed that it is good to
 awaken your Passion. Alas ! when it is once
 satisfied, it grows so languid, that it be-
 comes necessary to animate it with a little
 Jealousy. When you are in any Apprehen-
 sions of a Rival, you say the prettiest Things
 to me in the World : You then forget that
 you are happy, and represent yourself in the
 Condition of one who wishes to be so : But
 when we happen to be well together, you
 can place yourself, with all the Negligence
 imaginable, in an easy Chair, over-against
 me, without uttering one Word ; and I am
 sometimes tempted to believe you think as
 little as you speak. You lately entertain'd
 me with a few Endearments that seemed to
 be extremely tender, when, in reality, your
 Thoughts had no such Employment. Let
 me have your best Reasons for this Absence
 of Mind. You are certainly a most singu-
 lar Lover, and I confess there is something
 very agreeable to me, even in that Singu-
 larity.

larity. At present, indeed, I have but very little Share in your good Graces : You left me, yesterday, in a very abrupt Manner, and, without doubt, made a gallant Resolution never to see me more ; tho' I could venture a considerable Wager, that you can't give me one Reason for that Air. You have taken it into your Head to be jealous of *R****, and will not so much as suffer him to write Sonnets in my Favour ; but you don't consider how touching it is to see one's Fame diffused through the World, under the tender Name of *Sylvia*. Permit me then to enjoy the Pleasure of Immortality : His Verses promise me that Blessing, whilst you only bestow upon me those Moments for which you can find no other Employment. Is this any Compensation to me for losing the Benefit of his Muse ? I likewise acknowledge, that he entertains me in my Chamber, when you are pleased to absent yourself from it ; and is very diligent in teaching me to make Verses. How delighted will you be, when in some future Glow of Passion, my inspired Imagination shall address to you the softest soothing Elegies ; when it shall call you the resitless *Corydon*, and trace out those enchanting Moments, when you triumphed over my defenceless Liberty, for ever ! As to any other Particulars, it is not, as yet, the proper Season

son fo
rance.
the W
but it
spair,
Comp
to hav
What
your I
Count
have
for y
with
to par
sonab
Time
me, I
I can
than
my I
unles
Affai

Y
Riva
Wor
of yo

son for your Jealousy to make its Appearance. You see there are some People in the World, who complain of my Rigours; but it would not be proper for you to despair, before I have favour'd them with my Compassion. You are certainly imprudent to have any Difference with me at present: What an odd Time have you chosen for your Resentment! The Marquis is in the Country, and in what Manner would you have me dispose of myself? I am resolved, for your Punishment, that you shall dine with me this very Day, and I don't intend to part with you till Night. You may reasonably imagine that I could employ my Time better; but if you had really loved me, I had not given you this Invitation. I cannot mortify you more successfully, than by allowing you so much Time to ask my Pardon. Be sure not to disappoint me, unless you intend to make it a very serious Affair.

L E T T E R X X X V .

YOU have succeeded in your Law-suit, and at the same time have gain'd a Rival: Can there be so happy a Man in the World as yourself? I omit the Gallantries of your Advocate, as well as your Obligations

tions to me: But I have perform'd Wonders with your Judges. Could yon ever have imagined, that the old, consumptive, asthmatic, and Palsy-shaking Marquis of *** should ever take it into his Head to be my Lover, and catch the Opportunity of your Absence, to make me a formal Declaration of his Passion. He began his Suit with an extraordinary Present of Sweetmeats, which are the usual Lure of these venerable Seducers. This engaging Present was accompanied with a Letter, a thousand times more insipid, if possible, than all his Confectionary. Yesterday he favour'd us with his Company at Dinner, and, when that was over, found Means to disengage himself from my Husband, and came directly to my Apartment, where he knew I was alone; with a full Persuasion that I should prove an easy Conquest to so amiable a Person as himself. He approached me with a trembling Pace, that was more the Effect of his Age, than of any Timidity; and, clasping my Hand in his, was pleased to compliment it with a Kiss. I began to be offended at this Politeness; but as his Lordship took it for granted, that a particular Account of his former Conquests would dispose me to be more favourable to him, he named at least twenty Ladies of the old Court, who had been sensible of his Merit:

He

He gave me as many ancient Receipts, very proper to warm the Imagination, and breath'd out, at least, the same Number of Sighs. But, finding that he derived no Advantage from all the Pains he took, he threw himself at my Feet, protesting that I had banished every other Beauty from his Heart ; that Conquest was inseparable from my charming Eyes, whose Beams had rekindled those Flames in his Soul which Decorum dissuaded him from cherishing, much more than Nature. He added, that he had sigh'd for three Months past, without daring to disclose to me the Cause of his Anguish ; that he was apprehensive of the Ridicule an amorous Man draws upon himself, when he has survived that youthful Part of Life, which makes such Impressions pardonable ; but that I had made him incapable of receiving any Benefit from that Consideration : He concluded with intreating me to pity his Sufferings ; and, to induce my Compliance, assured me that he was the discreetest Person of his whole Sex. As yet, I had not utter'd one Word, and he already presumed, from my Silence, that I had no Intention to be insensible ; when upon the Close of his Harangue I happened to cast my Eyes upon him, and immediately burst into the most hearty Fit of Laughter that ever escap'd me. Nothing could be

so diverting, as to see this trembling old Gentleman on his Knees, gently grasping one of my Hands, while his hook'd Stick lay at my Feet, as a Tribute paid to me by his Passion; his twinkling Eyes half overshadow'd with the Growth of his Brows, and his Lips embarrass'd with the absurdest Stammer that ever afflicted a Lover. The more he enlarged upon his Passion, the less was I able to contain my Mirth. He then began to be displeased, and I was encreasing my Diversion at his Expence; when my Husband unexpectedly came into the Apartment. The Moment the old Marquis beheld him, he made very surprizing Endeavours to rise, but was not able to recover himself from his unlucky Situation. Ha! my perfidious Friend, cried the Marquis my Husband, I can guess at the Conversation you have had with my Spouse: Assist him with your Hand, Madam, continued he, addressing himself to me, don't you see that his Rheumatism will confine him at your Feet till to-morrow Morning! Let me advise you, my Lord, said he to my reverend Lover, not to make any more Addresses to that Lady; she is more perverse, if possible, than yourself; and you may not always happen to find me in the gay Disposition I discover at present; for which Reason it will be proper to separate
for

for this time. The old Marquis paid his Respects to me in the utmost Confusion, and retired. For my part, I am very sorry he is not worth my playing you a small piece of Inconstancy; but I comfort myself with the Hopes that a more inviting Opportunity may happen to offer; for I am certain I have it in my Power to avenge myself on your Coldness, and even your Inconstancy. The Perfidy of Lovers only furnishes fine Women with a Pretext for new Passions.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

WITH how much Coldness do you complain of my Absence! When your Heart can only supply you with inanimate Expressions, why don't you borrow Life from your Imagination? Could you but be sensible of the Manner in which you promise me an eternal Passion, you would blush at your calm Description of those Impressions that ought to inspire you with all the Warmth of Rapture. You entertain me with nothing but Wit, and have sent me the most agreeable Letter in the World: You relate to me a Variety of pleasing Passages; but of what Consequence to me, are the Adventures that occur at *Paris*? I say, to me, who am solicitous to know

N 2

nothing

nothing but the true State of your Heart! You acquaint me that you are well, which to me was the only pleasing Particular in all your Letter: But you have not once discovered the least Inquietude for my Welfare. Do you even complain of your tedious Absence from me; and can you possibly be so gay, when you no longer behold me? Is it to insult me then, that you write with so much shining Wit? Is it thus that you requite my melancholy musing Hours; and have you no other Consolation to offer me in my afflicted Solitude? You tell me, indeed, that you love me; but ah! 'tis in such a languid Strain ——— You have no Sensibility of the Passion you would express! Shall I never, then, be certain that I possess your Heart; and can Absence contribute to your Repose, when to real Lovers it proves so insupportable a Pang? How justly may I reproach you for loving me with so much Moderation! What exquisite Joys do you lose by your Insensibility! Even now, when I am conscious of all your Indifference, I enjoy a Felicity to which you will be an eternal Stranger. I am sensible, at least, that I live, and have the Satisfaction, Ingrate as you are, to live for you alone. I recollect all our past Delights; and that dear Remembrance inspires me with Joys, infinitely superior to any you can possibly experience

in

in the most tender Moments. My Slumbers are more animated than your Heart has ever been in the full Vivacity of its Transports; and when even your Coldness drives me to Desperation, I have a secret Pleasure to consider that your Love has no Competition with the Warmth of mine; but my Anguish would soon be fatal to me, should you entirely cease to love me. Why do I incommode you with these Reproaches, does not your Indifference render you sufficiently miserable? I have an Inclination to believe, that were you capable of loving more, all your Transports would be devoted to me; and it is impossible for me to suppress the Satisfaction I enjoy, when I would persuade myself that I am the only Object of your Passion. — I the only Object of your Passion! How could I entertain that seducing Hope! If you lov'd none but me, you would, long before now, have abandon'd a Place, where I am no more presented to your View, and where every Object around you ought to awaken in your Soul, the cruel Idea of the Felicity you no longer enjoy: You would fly with Detestation from every Snare that seduces you to be unfaithful to me. But alas! I already know you too well! Gay Scenes of Pleasure are your only Pursuit; and whenever they rise before you, you forget that you

are beloved beyond Expression; and that there is an unfortunate Person in the World, who only lives for you, and has no Happiness but what flows from the Tenderness with which you once have treated her. But ah! how killing is that Reflection! and how vainly do I endeavour to fix my Tranquillity on the Proteftations you have made me! I am in perpetual Dread of your Inconstancy: I am rack'd with Jealousy, without beholding the fatal Object; and my Heart is as much tormented as if she was placed in my full View. The Passion with which you have inflamed my Soul, is for ever presenting you to my Imagination; but amidst the Delight I derive from your Remembrance, I am unable to persuade myself that you continue to be constant. O! tell me, am I then so happy as to deceive myself? Be so generous as to ease me of the Agonies I now feel, and preserve me from those I yet dread. I am sufficiently tortured by this cruel Separation from you; and for the Completion of my Misfortunes, I know not when I shall be so happy as to leave this Place. My Mother's Indisposition detains me from you, and my Husband orders me to continue here, though I know not why. Can you count, like me, the dismal Days of our Absence? Do you remember, that 'tis now a Month since I
last

last beheld you? Do you consider, that I must still live fifteen Days, without seeing you (would to Heaven I had no other Calamity to fear!) and that I may possibly not hear from you in all that tedious Space? Adieu, my charming Count! In what manner soever you may be disposed to treat me, I am sensible that I shall love you while I live. But will this Assurance be so satisfactory to you, as to make you undesirous of kindling a Passion in any other Breast? Why am I not permitted to write to you any longer! Were it not for the Impatience of the Post, I believe I should never finish this Letter: But my Letters are disagreeable, and I fear you will hardly prevail on yourself to read them to the End. Did I love as languidly as you, they would, if possible, be shorter than yours, tho' even these in your present Strain of Indifference are much too long. Adieu.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

WH O could have thought that such a solemn Prude as Lady * * * should prevail upon her rigid Virtue, to make you the warmest Declaration that was ever known? What a Scene of Diversion has she created me, and how much am I oblig'd
to

to you, for affording me such an uncommon Pleasure ! What a formal Collection of Languors, Anxieties and Impertinence is her Letter ! The Infantas of former Days expressed themselves, in such a Strain, to their impatient Knights : And since you can sacrifice such a fine Adventure to me, I ought to return you my sincere Acknowledgments ; but will you permit me to make my own Reflections on the Motives that inclin'd you to such a Sacrifice ? You are an Enemy to all Uneasiness ; and the refined Sentiments she was preparing for your constant Entertainment, would not have amused you so much as my Indiscretions. You grew persuaded that you should hear long Dissertations on the Merit of Constancy, and that she would be eternally representing to you the Pleasure that a Passion, purified from Vice, diffuses into a delicate Soul : You expected to be told, that a Lover should never presume to entertain the least Hope ; and must even think it criminal to improve the happy Moment. These were all the Pleasures you imagin'd would arise to you, from a Commerce with her : But let me advise you to undeceive yourself ; those Women who appear so extremely rigid, are not more incapable of Desires than the rest of their Sex ; and this Lady, by reading Romances, is but too well instructed in the

Neces-

Necessity of abridging them. You would
 not have suffer'd under her Empire so much
 as you imagin'd; and her Impatience, by
 its Prevention of yours, would not have per-
 mitted you to continue one Day in the least
 Doubt of a perfect Felicity. How merito-
 rious is your Goodness on this Occasion!
 You might have disguised your Infidelity to
 me, in such an Amour, with so much Ease,
 that I should never have suspected your
 Proceeding. How could you possibly re-
 sist the Charm of ranking this Lady in the
 Number of your Conquests? Each Day
 produces Events which surprize me; but,
 without diminishing the Merit of your Sa-
 crifice, I must confess I never entertain'd
 the least Apprehensions of such a Rival;
 and if you had really loved her, I should
 have been sufficiently avenged on your Per-
 fidy, by the inglorious Shame you would
 soon have been fated to sustain. Congra-
 tulate yourself, then, for your Insensibility
 of her Endeavours to please you, and rest
 persuaded that I have received so much Sa-
 tisfaction from this Instance of your Fide-
 lity, that, were it possible for me, I would
 love you more than I do at present. But I
 have the Misfortune, amidst so many de-
 lightful Circumstances, to be affected with
 a mortal Inquietude; tho' I believe it will
 receive some Mitigation, when I acquaint
 you

you with the Cause. I think I have lately observed, that my Husband no longer entertains a Passion for your Cousin. The Discontinuance of his frequent Visits to her; the Abatement of his Impatience; the Increase of his Endearments to me; his artful Detractions, whenever she is the Subject of his Discourse; his new Dislike of square Arms and short Noses; his long Continuance at home; his Sollicitude to please me; his Conversations on the Hurry of the World, and the Inconstancy of Women; the Caresses I receive from him, and his Confusion whenever he beholds me, are Circumstances that make me fear he has an Inclination to renew a favourable Intercourse with me. I may possibly be alarm'd without any just Reason; but I am perfectly acquainted with his Caprice: It must always be indulged; and perhaps I am now so unfortunate as to be made its Object. Adieu: I will see you to-day, at the Place you already know. Love me, my dear Count; love me, I intreat you, for ever! Your Tendernefs will enable me to sustain the sharpest Calamities; and, when I am in your Presence, I am no longer sensible of their Severity.

B I L L E T.

Lady***, in compliance with your Desires, makes you an Offer of her House, and you have her Permission to perform the Honours of it to-morrow, since that happens to be your Resolution. St. Far*** will accompany you; and would to Heaven, my Conduct were to be survey'd by Spectators more rigid than those who are then to be present; and that they would prove as incommodious to me, as I fear they will be otherwise! I am preparing to revisit those Places where I gave you the first Instances of my Weakness; and I am but too sensible of those which you still intend to require from me. Your Letter glows with incanting Love; I am conscious of your Transports, and entirely diffident of myself. Why do you remind me of those Moments which I would consign to eternal Oblivion! Can you entertain your Imagination with no other Ideas? What a Number of Reproaches have I in reserve for you; and how delighted should I be to come to a Disagreement with you, were I not apprehensive of the Reconciliation that would ensue.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

I Am preparing to quarrel with you in the most improbable and ridiculous manner that can possibly be imagined ; but I am in a very ill Humour to-day, and you must submit to suffer the Effects of my Caprice. You see that I anticipate you in your own Designs ; and, as I begin with an Acknowledgment of my Folly, I suppose I shall discover as little Discretion thro' the whole Course of this Letter. I was not with the Dutchess yesterday ; but Lady *** made her Grace a Visit. This Lady, as you must needs be sensible, is so extremely fond of Love, that when she has not Time to ingage in it herself, she is sure to make it the Subject of her Conversation. She desired to know your Sentiments of Constancy, and you very frankly answer'd her, that nothing in Nature could be more disagreeable. This Opinion of yours was contested by the Company ; but that they might not suppose you defended your Notion out of mere Obstinacy, you was pleased to assure them, that you yourself had experienced Constancy to be a very incommodious and displeasing Quality ; and, to remove all manner of Doubt, you related several Adventures wherein you had formerly been engaged.

It

It seems, you could hardly contain the Satisfaction you enjoy'd, in describing the Pleasure of acting a perfidious Part; and you thanked Heaven, that your Inconstancy had never been anticipated by the Falshood of any Woman you ever convers'd with. You may suppose me to be piqued at this Confession of yours; and indeed I began to imagine I should find it very pleasant to practise a little Inconstancy myself; but at last I grew so ridiculous, as to believe it would be more agreeable to experience it from you. This, indeed, is taking a Part upon one's self that seems a little melancholy; but then, one has the Pleasure of being pitied in such a Condition, and of hearing one's self recommended, as a rare Example to a degenerate Age; which indeed may seem to be some Compensation for what one loses in other Particulars. But though I am persuaded you had then an Inclination to indulge your Wit, at the Expence of your Sincerity; yet I am not at all satisfied to hear you urge such little Pieces of History (and which perhaps may be very true) in Vindication of an Opinion that displeases me; and, I think, in your present Situation, you ought not to suppose there was ever any such thing as Inconstancy in the World. That you love me, I am infallibly sure; nay, I am convinced you adore

O

me,

me, in spite of all your Indolence : But if that Adoration had not been mutual, what would have been your Condition? I may improve this Pretext, and tell you, in my Justification, that since you derive so much Pleasure from Inconstancy, you must certainly have an Inclination to practise it: But I find, to my Misfortune, that the Idea of loving you with the softest Sincerity, is still predominant in my Soul; for which reason I flatter myself, that while I am under the Influence of such a Thought, you will have the Generosity to be constant to my Passion. This is such a cruel Expectation, that I begin to tremble for you: But I am disposed to be malicious; and, to compleat your Mortification, I lay my Commands upon you, to pass the Day with me; for I have a Curiosity to know if you have Presumption enough to justify, in my Presence, the Opinion you maintained yesterday. Adieu: This is all I have to offer to you at present, and, I must confess, it was not so material, as to make it necessary for me to write such a long Letter: But I found myself chagrin'd, and took up my Pen before I had fully determin'd myself as to my last Command. I thought it would not be decent to expose you too suddenly; and though I am piqued against you, it is not worth my giving myself the Trouble to mort-

mortify you in a serious manner ; and yet, I must confess, I have some Inclination to it. My whole Letter is a Collection of incoherent Thoughts ; and you now see the Reason of my writing so many insignificant Particulars, which I should never have sent to you, if I had been guided by Discretion : But you have so much Time upon your Hands, that I have no occasion to reproach myself, for supplying you with a little Employment, and you will find some, in reading this Letter, whether it be to the purpose or not. I ought, and indeed intended to quarrel with you ; but, have I put that Design in Execution ? What, in the Name of Heaven, can I never conclude ! Adieu ; I am determin'd to love you for ever.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

MAKE no Scruple to confess that I am very amiable, and that, in spite of your frequent Inclinations to change, my Charms still detain you in their captivating Chains. You may take it for granted that your Liberty is irrecoverable ; one Glance from me, is sufficient to destroy all the Resolutions you can form in my Dis-

O 2

favour ;

favour; and the Moment you behold me, you blush to think you could ever have the least Intention to be inconstant. Have you not Reason, my dear Count, to be confus'd at such a Thought? Do we know with whom we engage, when we are in pursuit of new Conquests? Can the tormenting Uncertainty of our Ability to please, and the painful Endeavours to penetrate into the Disposition of an unknown Heart, be productive of any Joys like those we experience, when we read the soft Sentiments of a Heart we know to be our entire Property? Can you make any Discovery in mine, which does not contribute to your Felicity? Your dear Image resides there without a Competitor, and every Thought it forms, has you for its charming Object. How sedulous is it, to exclude all other Ideas; but, with what a Heaven of Joy is it always elated, when it presents you with its unblemished Tendernefs, and deludes itself into a Belief of mutual Returns! What Proofs of undiffembled Love have I not already afforded you; and how mortifying is my Incapacity, to oblige you with any which you have not experienced before! Believe me, my dearest Count, my Passion has no Bounds: Ah! why then should my Manner of disclosing it be confin'd to any limitations! Can you possibly

possibly resolve to change? What Pleasure can you promise yourself from such an Inclination, unless it be the untimely Death of one who loves you to Adoration?

You had, yesterday, the Cruelty to assure me, that it might be possible to extinguish your Passion; and can you really entertain such an Inclination? Have I ever given you a just Cause to treat me with so much Barbarity? You tell me, I yield to your Transports with Reluctance; but alas! you turn your Eyes from mine, when you injure me with that unkind Accusation. Ah me! my Heart can testify that I have been affected with too much Sensibility! Can Love only consist in the Gratification of warm Desires: Are there no Moments, wherein the Virtue of a Lady may interpose between the Softness of her Soul, and the Ardours of her Lover; and is all her Conduct to be one continued Scene of Compliance? But I discover the Sentiments by which you are influenced; you have an Inclination to wear out your Passion; and, can I be such a fatal Enemy to my Happiness, as to aid you in that Intention? Shall I consent to lose you for ever, when I am sensible that each Day endears you to me, more than the last? I am not ignorant of the Effects produced in Love, by a Flow of constant Pleasures: The Novelty of their

first Appearance disposes us to taste them with Transport; and the Desires, inflamed by a long Resistance, furnish them with Charms, that alas! are soon fated to lose their Attractions. Habit, perhaps, and the Sallies of Fancy, may keep alive a faint Inclination to them, when they no longer touch the Heart; but what would become of me, were I once to behold you in such a Disposition; and from whom could I expect Relief, should I be reduced to lament your Indifference, even in those Moments of Love which you are now so perpetually impatient to claim! But, I believe, my best Expedient to escape that Calamity, will be to awaken your Complaints of my Coldness. I have some Inclination to make you renew your first Ardours, and to have the Pleasure of seeing you repeat all the Assiduities that should be previous to your Conquest of my Heart. I begin to think those are the only Means left me, to rekindle your Passion; but do you still continue to esteem me worthy to be lov'd? I had determin'd not to entertain one soft Desire all this Day; but I happen'd accidentally to cast my Eyes on my Glass, and found myself so very amiable, that I had no Power to persist in my Resolution. Adieu: I return you my Acknowledgments for your Letter; you never writ so many tender Things to me before;

fore; and you may come whenever you please, to gather their Fruits. I have a thousand Satisfactions to impart to you, with relation to the Passages of yesterday, and the Impertinencies that escaped me, at the Conclusion of this Letter; but I never know what I write, when I am confessing that I love you.

L E T T E R X L.

I Am at a loss to know when your Follies will end, or when I shall cease to indulge them. I begin to be weary of the one, and don't find myself disposed to be much longer a Dupe to the other. From the first Moment we began to love, or rather, from the first Moment I began to love you, I never experienced so much Torment as you have given me for these four Days past; nor did you ever entertain such irrational Thoughts till now. Of what Consequence is it to you, to know whether I have been sensible of a Passion for any one, before I lov'd you? What Prerogative had you over my Heart, before I knew there was such a Person in the World as yourself? Did I imagine, when I first prevail'd upon myself to love you, that you had disregarded all my Sex to the very Moment
you

you conceived a Passion for me? But, taking it for granted that you have formerly been devoted to another Object, why should I be disquieted at your Conduct in that particular, if the Ardours you now profess for me, be really sincere? I confess, it would have been not a little pleasing to me, to have kindled the first Desires in your Breast: But, tho' I was very young when I became acquainted with you, it was then a considerable time since your first Passion had been extinguished; and could I, with any Justice, consider your Indulgence of it as a Crime? But had I been indiscreet enough to have given you any Intimations of so peculiar a Jealousy, would not your Answer have been, Could I possibly divine, Madam, that you was reserved for me; and should I decline the Conquests that presented themselves all around me, to render myself more deserving of a Lady, to whom I was then an absolute Stranger? And now, my dear fanciful Count, I shall offer you the very Reply you ought to receive from me. Had I been in the Situation wherein you are pleased to suppose me, it was impossible for me to presage that I should, one day, be so happy as to receive the Homage of Count ***, and be delighted with it at the same time: But, if any Gentleman before him had tender'd his Addresses to me, in a Manner that

I then

I then thought agreeable, I should have been guilty of no Infidelity to Count * * *, had I approv'd of the Person who sigh'd for me at that time. Be so ingenuous then as to acknowledge, that you are only studious for a Pretext to justify the Inconstancy with which you are preparing to treat me, tho' I must assure you, I am too malicious to afford you that Advantage against me. You can no longer support the Dissatisfaction that is so incommodious to you; and this is the only Source of all the Ruptures you attempt with me. You demand from me, the sincere Particulars of my Life, and the exact State of my Heart, before and since I had any Knowledge of you; and you expect to be acquainted with all the Impressions you have created in my Soul. Your Intention, in this Proceeding, is only to furnish yourself with Reasons to despise me, or at least to have an Opportunity of paying a Compliment to your own Vanity. I ought therefore to deny you the Gratification you desire, were I not persuaded that I should thereby confirm you in your Error: And though you may possibly be not disposed to credit the Circumstances I shall relate, yet I have the Satisfaction to consider that they will not be falsified by your Incredulity. I am obliged to you for the History you offer me of your own Life;
but

but I am not a Person of much Curiosity. Besides, it may be such another Fiction as that which I am now preparing to give you, for the Punishment of your Extravagancies; and there are a thousand Particulars in such a delicate Subject, that had better be concealed than disclosed. However, I begin thus:

Represent to yourself that State of Life, in which young Persons of my Sex begin to be sensible they ought to please, and are desirous of succeeding; and then be so good as to assure yourself, that I had no such Perception, and that I was an equal Stranger to those Inclinations. The Advantage of an Education in the polite World, with the Aid of some Reason, a considerable Share of necessary Pride, and a Series of good Instructions, sufficiently disclosed to me the Absurdities of Mankind. I beheld them without the least Satisfaction, and found myself disgusted at their Conversation. The youthful Part of the Sex seem'd to me, a Set of Impertinents, and the Men in Years were vicious and incommoding. I consider'd their Commerce with the Women, and generally made such Discoveries as render'd them the Objects of my Diffidence, or Aversion. There was one Gentleman, indeed, and I shall immediately name him, lest my Silence should infect you with a new Vein of

Jea-

Jealousy. This one Gentleman, then, was
 the Marquis***, who, as you are sensible,
 is now dead; and he, I confess, had ac-
 quired the Art to please me. The exact and
 easy Politeness which graced every Part of
 his Behaviour; an unaffected Turn of Wit,
 altogether uncommon in such an early Bloom
 of Youth; his Assiduities to me, and his
 sincere and artless Manner of acquainting me
 with his Passion, inspir'd me with pleasing
 Inclinations in his favour: But the Restric-
 tions to which my State of Life obliged me
 to conform, and the Counsels I derived from
 my Reason, prevented me from disclosing
 to him, the Progress he had made in my
 Heart. While I was under the Influence of
 these Dispositions, I was married, contrary
 to my Inclinations; and yet I never opposed
 the Will of those who were pleased to make
 that Choice for me. The Marquis was in-
 consolable upon this Occasion, and my In-
 quietudes were no-way inferior to his: But,
 as I suffer'd myself to be guided by Virtue,
 I began to surmount them by degrees. My
 Husband treated me in a very tender Man-
 ner; but, as I was preposses'd with another
 Passion, which, by its Calamities, was en-
 deared to me the more, I received the Te-
 stimonies of his Affection with a cold Indif-
 ference. The Marquis took a Resolution
 to travel, and his Absence gave me an Op-
 portunity

portunity to be more attentive to the Merit of my Husband. I endeavoured to suppress every criminal Sigh, and at last began to render my Duty a Pleasure. The Change which was then wrought in my Soul, delighted me beyond Expression: I was sensible that I loved, and my Joy was the greater, as I was conscious that I entertain'd a Passion for which I had no Reason to reproach myself.

I passed two Years in this State of Tranquillity: I lov'd the Marquis my Husband, and was mutually belov'd by him: I enjoy'd all the Liberty I could possibly desire, and those Moments which were not filled up by my Love, I devoted to Reading and Music, as well as to all other Attentions which amuse, at the same time that they instruct. But this happy State was of no long Continuance; my Husband gave a Loose to his Inconstancy, and his Indifference would have disclos'd it to me, tho' the World had been entirely silent on that Subject. This Discovery overwhelmed me with Despair; my Tears flow'd without Intermission; I sigh'd, and utter'd my Anguish to him, in gentle Expostulations, for the Torments he caus'd me to sustain; but all those Sighs and Expostulations were unavailing. In vain did I employ the most obliging Endeavours to reclaim him: His Indif-

Indif-
cuom
temp
into
Refere
jure
gabl
duct
Reat
succo
of th
conf
ror
easil
acqu
habi
the
plea
the
Con
desc
and
offe
me
was
the
nati
the
Sou
Hu
pea

Indifference to me grew daily more conspicuous ; from Coldness he proceeded to Contempt, and he heightened that Contempt into Barbarity. I have a Spirit capable of Resentment, and never suffer any one to injure me with Impunity. I was so indefatigable to extinguish my Passion, and his Conduct supplied me with such unanswerable Reasons for that Proceeding, that I at last, succeeded in my Attempt. This fatal Proof of the perfidious Disposition of Mankind, confirm'd me more than ever, in the Horror I had entertain'd for the Sex. You may easily suppose, that I was not solicitous to acquire a Lover ; on the contrary, I had so habituated myself to Insensibility, that all the seducing Language of those who were pleased to think me amiable, contributed but the more to my Disquiet. I had too little Consideration for my Husband, even to condescend to avenge myself on his Baseness ; and indeed, the Vengeance that was then offer'd me, was altogether as disagreeable to me as the Avengers themselves ; and such was then my Insensibility, that I needed not the Dictates of Duty, to restrain my Inclinations. I now began to be charmed with the Tranquillity that was reinstated in my Soul : I was so happy as not to hate my Husband ; I amused myself with his repeated Inconstancies, and lived in perfect

Felicity, when at last, the Marquis himself introduced you into my Apartment. The Moment I beheld you, I found myself affected with unusual Impressions; your Conversation was extremely pleasing to me, and I was soon sensible that you lov'd me. It was then indeed, that all my Virtue was necessary to make me resolve to be offended at your Passion: But alas! I was unable to accomplish that Resolution, and you yourself are conscious that I had no such Power. At first, I was so unhappy as to flatter myself, that the Change I experienced in my Disposition, was no more than a weak and transient Impression you had created in my Soul; I resigned myself too much to that Imagination: I even raillied you for your Passion, and you derived sufficient Advantages from that Proceeding. You afterwards writ to me, and I imagined that the Severity of my Answer would discourage you from tormenting me any more. But I might possibly express my Intentions very imperfectly; you continued to write to me, and I, to inspire you with too good an Opinion of myself, assured you so often by my Letters that I did not love you, that I at last grew weary of those Repetitions, and writ to you that I really lov'd you. This you have experienced, Ingrate as you are! This I am daily confirming to you by new Proofs; but,

as you treat my Passion with Contempt, I begin to repent of those Indiscretions, which your Indifference to me, represents in such a criminal Light, that I wish they had always been as visible to me as they are now. My Repentance increases every Day, and I hope it will prove so effectual at last, that I shall entirely cease to love you. Adieu, my Lord; these are all the Particulars I had to relate, and perhaps they may be more than you had any Inclination to know.

B I L L E T.

You could not have invited me to a Party of Pleasure, in the Country, at a more unseasonable Time; I am so much indisposed, that I have not closed my Eyes last Night; and what convinces me that I am extremely ill is, that my Thoughts have not been too much employed on you: In short, I find myself so very weak and indolent, that I am surprized I have any Spirits left; and my Indisposition is the more afflictive to me, because I am persuaded it will create some Variance between us. I can only say, in my own Defence, that I had no Inclination to be out of order. You are sensible that I was extremely chearful yesterday, and perhaps that may have occasioned the Melancholy which has seized me to-day. You may suppose then, that I am in

*an excellent Disposition for the Country. I think the Weather perfectly dismal; my Horses are all sick, and my Coachman is already drunk. I am determin'd not to accompany Lady*** in her Coach. St. Far*** is always with her, and I have Reason to fear the World will say I have an Affection for him. It would be still worse to accept of your Coach, and therefore you may conclude that it is impossible for me to be one of the Party. However, you may favour me with a Visit, if that will amuse you. Perhaps I may have Company; but if we should happen to be alone, we will converse on some agreeable Subject or other: We will talk of Love, I mean in a Platonic Strain; or, if you please, we will divert ourselves at Cards; and this is all I can do for you, with any manner of Conscience.*

L E T T E R X L I.

AH my dearest Count! I am now fated to sustain the greatest of all Calamities, and we shall soon be the most unfortunate Persons in the World! My Pre-sages, alas! were but too well founded; but, not to keep you in Suspense, my Husband no longer loves your Cousin. He has thrown himself at my Feet, and intreated
me

me to pardon his Indiscretions; he even burst into Tears, and utter'd the most solemn Protestations that I should, for ever, be the only Object of his Passion: He then acquainted me, that he intended to pass the whole Summer with me in *Britany*. Ah! how shall I evade this fatal Departure! Can I possibly abandon all Regard to my Reputation? What will my Family think, should I refuse to accompany him; and, what Constructions will he pass on my Disinclination to obey him! How insupportable will be my Misfortune, should he discover the Cause of my Indifference! Ah! my dear Count, we must now be separated for ever! You have no Conception of those violent Emotions with which he is agitated in his Resentment: An eternal Exile will be the least of my Sufferings. To what a Scene of Misery am I reserved; and where shall I fly to a Resource that can protect me from his cruel Resolution! My Mother, who has been a Witness to my Tears, and is acquainted with all his Infidelities; that dear Parent, whose Consolation I formerly shar'd, is now dispos'd to consider this Reconciliation as the most fortunate Event that could happen in my Favour, and will join her Persecutions to those I shall sustain from my Husband, should I refuse to comply with his Intentions. I

shall be censured and forsaken, if I seem
averse to our Departure; and I shall die
with Despair, if I am compelled to be se-
parated from the only Person who can re-
concile me to Life. I shall be tormented,
without ceasing, by my Husband's Passion,
and at the same time, must prove a fatal
Prey to my own. I shall either be betray'd
by my inconsolable Sorrows, or tortur'd to
Distraction, by my vain Endeavours to sup-
press them. I shall be urged each Mo-
ment, to unfold the Cause of my Afflic-
tions, and rising Sighs will be my only Re-
ply; till at last, I shall be exposed to all
the fatal Effects that Jealousy is capable of
producing. But, I should, even then, be hap-
py, amidst all the Calamities I foresee, could
I persuade myself that I shall be for ever
dear to your Remembrance. If you can be
so generous as not to abandon an unfortunate
Creature, whose Passion for you, renders her
so wretched, there are no Torments, which
my Certainty of being lov'd by you, will not
enable me to support with Joy! I shall re-
ceive too delightful a Recompence for my
Woes, if you condescend to share them.
Adieu. Visit the Dutchess this Evening,
that I may see you, and once more enjoy the
only Felicity my Misfortunes have left me.

The End of the First Part.

LETTERS

FROM

The Marchionefs de *M****,

TO

Count de *R****.

LETTER XLII.

LET us no more, my dear Count, be rack'd with the Fears of a Separation; the same Caprice which prompted my Husband to a Reconciliation with me, has once more consign'd him to his ancient Chains, and your Cousin is still triumphant. Do you believe this Event is as pleasing to her as it proves to me? I am now convinced that his Jealousy of that Lady, created us all our Alarms; and he pretended to be enamour'd of me, with no other View than that she might imagine he was cured of his Passion for her. My Mother

ther is so astonish'd at this sudden Change,
 and resents the Indignity with which he treats
 me, to such a Degree, that, without confi-
 dering the Tendency of her Expressions, she
 has read me such Lectures, as would not ap-
 pear to her very amiable in Practice. As
 to the Marquis, he hardly remembers any
 of his late Protestations and penitent Spee-
 ches, but proceeds in his usual Track, tho'
 with a little more Circumspection than for-
 merly. 'Tis true, he is relaps'd into some
 Part of that Behaviour which I used to re-
 present by the Name of Coldness: But, what
 Reason have I to regard the Manner in
 which he lives with me, provided he ceases
 to torment me. Let it be our Care, my
 dear Count, to persist in our mutual Pas-
 sion; and since our Fears of an eternal Se-
 paration are over, let our Ardours awaken
 into a new Vivacity. The Alarms I have
 lately sustained, were altogether superfluous
 to me; my Heart would have persisted in
 its fond Attachment to you, without their
 officious Aid, but yours would have soon
 been languid, in the continued Serenity of
 Repose. I am oblig'd to the Marquis, for
 those enchanting Instances of your Passion,
 which you have lately afforded me. I have
 seen you in those Emotions of which I ne-
 ver, till now, could believe you capable. I
 have beheld your Eyes moisten'd with the
 first

first Tears they ever shed for me, and indeed they were an Offering which I little expected from you. I am sensible that Love alone could excite such a tender Flow: How precious to me are those endearing Drops! With what Raptures of Gratitude shall I treasure them in my Remembrance! Surely we were form'd for each other, and one Moment's Disunion would be inconsistent with the Texture of our Souls. We should grow inanimate in the least Intermission of our Love. Ah! what would become of me, should I be fated to lose you! Is it possible for me to live a Moment without you; and, may I not add, that even your Condition would be very wretched, if you no longer had me to love you? One Day, perhaps—
 But, I dare not indulge that Thought; it shoots a chilling Tremor through my Soul, and those Presages which elude all my Endeavours to suppress them, are perpetually filling me with Terror and Confusion. They certainly spring from the Circumstances that at present attend me; and tho' I have been relieved from the Calamity that threaten'd me, I am unable to conquer my Apprehension of others. Alas! I may have many to experience still! How can I be sure, that at the very Time, when I imagine you love me with all the Warmth of a raptur'd Imagination, I shall have no Cause to dread
 that

that sudden Distaste which is the usual Effect of a long and tranquil Passion? Who can convince me that my Husband, in the Course of his natural Inconstancy, will not render me as unhappy hereafter, as I have lately been? Perhaps Death — Ah! would it please Heaven that we may be separated by that alone! Adieu. Be very certain that I adore you, and that nothing shall ever prevent me from being totally yours; no not even your Indifference.

L E T T E R XLIII.

S*T. Far**** had Reason to acquaint you in his Letter, that I was learning Philosophy; but he ought not to have inform'd you, that I applied myself to that Science, to be taught the Method of extinguishing my Passion for you. As your Absence perpetually disquiets me, I imagin'd, the best Expedient to render it more supportable, would be to find some Employment for my Thoughts; and you ought to think yourself obliged to me, for chusing an Amusement of this Nature. Few Women would have had Recourse to Logic for Consolation, in the Absence of a Lover; and I believe that you yourself would not have been guided by such an Inclination, in the same
 Case.

Case. But it seems you are afraid that Philosophy will furnish me with Resolution enough to moderate the unfortunate Passion I entertain for you. How admirable would it be, could it accomplish such a Miracle! But you may rest satisfied, that all the Benefit I have hitherto gain'd from it, has consisted in a grave Attention to long and tedious Reasonings, in which I have sometimes been so absurd as to engage; and indeed I have made such a Progress, that if Heaven does not assist me very soon, I shall not be able to understand myself. My Master is the prettiest Pedant in the World, most enchantingly powder'd and curl'd; and, if I am rightly inform'd, he has the Happiness to speak *Hebrew*, with all the Politeness imaginable. I believe, I have a little disconcerted his System of Morality. His Ideas are all confused, when his Eyes are fixed on me, and he expresses them with more Obscurity than he conceives them. He stammers out a set of barbarous Words, which are render'd still less intelligible by his Glances; and, I should have dismissed this charming Tutor before now, if I had not expected from him a Declaration of Love, in the *Hebrew* Language, which, without doubt, must be extremely pathetic: I may venture to say, upon the whole, that my Dislike of this Science is all the Advantage

vantage I have received from it. The Inquietude I sustain from your Absence, is far from being abated, by my Endeavours to amuse my Thoughts; and I don't find my Heart one jot the more philosophic, for all the learned Lessons I have attended to. In vain does my Reason counsel me to forget you, and all my sad Reflections have as little Effect, as salutary as they may seem. My Soul is wounded with Remorse, and I sink under the Weight of my guilty Conduct. I pursue my Passion in its fatal Career, and blush to think I ever attempted to oppose it. I know that you will one day cease to love me, and am sensible that the Bands form'd by Frailty and Caprice, are easy to be broken. This Conviction increases my Torment, instead of contributing to my Relief. I am overwhelmed with the Apprehensions of your Inconstancy; and the Idea of that Calamity I shall sustain by losing you, makes me incapable of discovering those Advantages I might possibly derive from your Infidelity. Could I recover myself from the fatal Infatuation that has seized me, my Conduct would be no longer obnoxious to my own Reproaches: But alas! I should then lose the exquisite Bliss of loving you to Idolatry; and, where could the World furnish me with a Compensation for that Loss?

Yes,

Ye
all th
Breast
Decla
usual
to be
Refle
Even
Impu
Hav
gent
plied
sion,
of it
my l
more
prev
the
stand
from
self t
ever
have
Prin
me.
Tho
serv
The
a R
crifi
best

Yes, my dear Count, I love you with all the Tenderneſs that ever ſofter'd a gentle Breſt; but I incommode you with this Declaration. You write to me with an unuſual Coldneſs; you believe that I ſhall ceaſe to be yours, and intimate to me that my Reflexions make you apprehenſive of that Event. Ah me! have you any Reason to Impute thoſe Reflections to me as a Crime? Have they ever triumphed over my indulgent Frailty? And, if I have not been ſupplied with Virtue enough to reſiſt your Paſſion, can you believe that the remainder of it will have any Power to tear you from my Heart. You are offended at my Remorſe; but, am I capable, at all times, to prevent it from rending my Soul? From the firſt moment I lov'd you, every Inſtance of my Conduct has been a Deviation from my Duty. I ought to reproach myſelf for every Word I have written, and for every Thought I have conceived. You have no rigid Duty to combat, no ſtrict Principles to violate, in devoting yourſelf to me. You may impart to me all your Thoughts, and reſign yourſelf, without Reſerve, to the Irregularity of your Deſires. Theſe are the happy Prerogatives you claim a Right to enjoy. But can I, who have ſacrificed to your Inclinations, all I had to beſtow; can I, who live for you alone, be

bleſs'd with any Compoſure of Soul, when the leaſt Sigh that eſcapes me is a Crime, and when the Effects of my fatal Paſſion perpetually threaten me with the Loſs of the only Perſon capable of reconciling me to my Frailty? Adieu: You will not be much amused with this Letter; my Deſign, however, was not to create you any Diſquiet; but, at preſent, I can only form afflictive Ideas. Think of your Return, and revive me with your charming Preſence. I would urge you to haſten your Departure, but that I know you have Orders to continue where you are: But, as painful as they prove to me, I ſhould not be inſenſible of Satisfaction, were I certain that you ſometimes wiſh to ſee me. Adieu: Be careful of your Welfare, I conjure you, if it be only for my ſake.

L E T T E R XLIV.

HOW much is a Woman to be pitied when ſhe loves, and how ridiculous is a Man when he is the Object of that Paſſion! You may think this moral Reflection entirely miſapplied, becauſe you imagine it intended for yourſelf; but I am willing to undeceive you: And tho' I might, without any Injuſtice, repeat this Obſervation, with reſpect

respect to you and myself; yet I must own, you have no Concern in it at present. Lady *** and *St. Far* *** have lately disagreed to such an extreme, that whether it be that *St. Far* *** has no longer an Inclination to be constant, or that Lady *** has, by her ill Treatment, obliged him to turn his Attention to another Object, she seems to be persuaded that he has thrown himself into the Arms of Lady *L****, who, in order to favour him with a more decent Reception, has withdrawn herself from *D****. This Piece of Inconstancy has exceedingly displeased our Friend, who may possibly have been made sensible, by this Change in *St. Far****, that she still has a tender Regard for him, or perhaps her offended Vanity may disguise itself with an Emotion of Love. Whatever the Case may be, she is extremely dejected at her Loss, and can't be easily persuaded that *St. Far**** enjoys much Comfort under his. She likewise finds it as difficult to conceive, how that Gentleman, who always seem'd to embrace her Sentiments, could possibly attach himself to a Woman who has made herself so remarkable, by thinking in a different Strain. The most disconsolate of these two forsaken Lovers, is *D****, who, as he has but just made his Appearance in the World, and finding it necessary to establish a Reputation, deter-

Q 2

min'd.

min'd his Choice in favour of Lady * * *, as the most proper Person in all *Paris*, to make a young Gentleman known. He has paid his Addresses to her, received a favourable Treatment, and been dismissed, in the short space of one Month; so that the poor Gentleman has entirely lost his Reputation. Lady *L* * * * may now think she has some Pretensions to pass for a Judge of Merit, and indeed Women of her Class always conduct themselves by her Taste. *D* * * * might have expected very shining Advantages, but I doubt he will now find it difficult to attain them, since he has been rejected, before the first Month of his Services was expired. What Reflections must such an Adventure as this, produce! All Eyes are, at present, fixed upon *St. Far* * * *; a Number of curious Observers examine the Turn of his Shape, the Air of his Person, and are very industrious to discover the particular Graces that have had such an Effect on Lady *L* * * *; but all agree in general, that his Mien is extremely martial, and in complaisance to the Lady's Taste, they suppose him to have a great deal of Merit. For my part, I think *St. Far* * * * seems a little chagrin'd, amidst all his Applause; and, indeed, Lady * * * is a Mistress not to be lost without Regret. No one can be so well acquainted with her Value as himself: He

sighs

sighs when he mentions her Name to me, and I believe would be desirous of a Reconciliation, if he could imagine she would still be favourable to him, after the Rupture between them has been made so publick. On the other hand, Lady *** would be very willing to regain him ; but how ? What a Mortification would her lofty Spirit sustain, were she to disclose her Sorrows and soft Passion to a Man who has other Engagements, and would be confirm'd in his new Choice, by such a Confession ! And, should she only treat him with Indifference (which I think would be her discreetest Proceeding) he may happen to forget her in Reality. How shall the Honour of her Sex be render'd consistent with the Passion that torments her ? It has been judged necessary to have Recourse to you, in a Transaction of this Importance. Take an Opportunity then, to discourse with your Friend, and if his Passion for Lady L*** be only a Flight of Caprice, or the Effect of Despair, give him Hopes of obtaining her Pardon : But, if it should appear to you that he is actually in Love, let me caution you not to expose my Friend, nor give that Inconstant the Pleasure of knowing he is regretted. For if he resolves to be so ungenerous as to forsake her in this manner, she must endeavour to pique his Vanity by

Q 3

feigning

feigning a Passion for another. We have five or six Gallants, who are exceedingly well qualified to mortify him ; and she shall either love one of them, or give him Reason to believe so, by her Conduct. And don't you think now, that I have disclosed to you a Number of extraordinary Secrets ? But I lay my Commands on you, not to abuse the Confidence I repose in you ; and I expect an immediate Answer. Adieu, my dear amiable Count : I should be very unwilling to give Lady *** the same Trouble I charge myself with for her.

B I L L E T.

*My Husband has this moment acquainted me, that I am to be favour'd with the Company of that disagreeable Creature Lady***, who intends to pass the rest of the Day with me. This, you see, breaks all our Measures ; but I am resolved to disconcert his in Revenge. He is now preparing to visit your Cousin, with whom, I know, he has an Assignment. Be there at Dinner, and engage her Husband in some Party of Pleasure, which she cannot possibly decline ; and, to prevent any Excuse she may form, let him assume that positive Air which he so well knows how to improve. Be sure not to give her any Opportunity of writing to her Lover ; and, to compleat my*
Revenge,

Revenge, I would have that Neglect seem to be an Air of Infidelity. I know you will exasperate your Cousin by this Proceeding; but you must plead your usual Inconsideration for your Excuse. As to any other Particulars, she will not be more unhappy than myself, who am not to see you all this Day. Conduct her home in the Evening, in the politest manner you can; but forbear to inquire the Cause of that ill Humour she will certainly discover: This would take up too much Time, and I shall be impatient to return you my Acknowledgments.

L E T T E R XLV.

HOW can you possibly imagine, that I am your Enemy? You are pleased to think I yesterday assumed an Air of Coldness and Constraint; but can you impute that to me as a Crime; and was it not incumbent on you to dissipate those Clouds that darken my Soul? Your Coldness, I am certain, was very evident all the Day. You was incapable of entertaining me with any tolerable Conversation; and whenever your Eyes were fixed upon me, they expressed a Dissatisfaction and Contempt which you had no Power to conceal. Have I offended you in any criminal Instance?

There

There was a Time, when I believed a new Passion would render me less amiable in your Eyes; but I know you too well at present, to treat you with that Injustice. Your Heart is sometimes so unkind, as to appear to you in its natural Disposition: It is utterly incapable of any endearing Sentiments; what then would you have it express? Nature has imparted to you an Insensibility, which Politeness may perhaps correct, but will never be able to extinguish. You were not form'd for Love; and as you are always Master of yourself, you are only the Spectator of those Transports you create in others. I always behold you pensive, in those Moments which ought to banish Reason, and which you never fail to employ in such a manner as justly awakens mine. You discover an Impatience for such Pleasures as you are incapable of relishing; and if you sometimes feign the Warmth of Desires, your Intention is only to flatter your Vanity, or give Disquiet. You can often entertain me with the most amiable Language, while the dispirited Calm in your Eyes perpetually contradicts your Expressions. You have no Idea either of Love or its Object, but you give yourself the Trouble of feigning the one, that you may appear polite; and you never see the other, but with an Intention to divert yourself with a credulous unfortunate

fortun
to y
with
Capr
ment
Able
You
sions
pleat
pleas
Defin
when
delig
with
discl
and
give
I to
Cold
her,
equa
your
it ou
in y
disp
wou
tion
Ind
by t
Gra
quin

fortunate Creature, who has resign'd herself to your Power, and whom you sacrifice with a cruel Pleasure, to your Coldness and Caprice. You are ever industrious to torment me, and practise all the Barbarities of Absence, Disdain, and groundless Jealousy. You are always insensible of gentle Impressions; and when you might render me completely happy, by the least Inclination to please me; when my Resignation to your Desires merits your softest Returns; and when I languish in the Expectation of that delightful Moment, which ought to bless me with your charming Presence, your Eyes disclose to me the most cruel Indifference; and if you are attentive to any thing, 'tis to give me some new Cause for Tears. Were I to view a Rival, and could attribute your Coldness to the Passion you entertain'd for her, I believe my Tortures would not be equal to those I now sustain, in beholding your Conduct to me, so different from what it ought to be, when I have no Competitor in your Heart. Why is not my Husband disposed to be jealous? The Necessity you would then be under of eluding his Precautions, might possibly awaken you from your Indolence. Your Desires would be inflamed by the Difficulties of affording them their Gratification; and your Passion would acquire a more ingenious Vivacity, to surmount

mount the Obstacles he might interpose in your Way: Your Visits would then be more frequent; your Tenderness would increase, and I should have the Happiness of beholding you more attentive to please me. But, O Heavens! How do I discover my Folly, in wishing to experience so many Calamities! I must love you to a strange Extreme indeed, to be willing to secure your Heart at such a Price. Could all your fondest Affection afford me any Compensation for the Torments I should sustain from my Husband; and would it not be more advantageous for me to make such an Improvement of your Indifference, as would disengage me from a Passion that gives you so much Inquietude, and begins to be odious to myself? Adieu: I am offended at my Frailty, in loving you so tenderly, and for having so much Reason to complain of your Conduct; and so little Power to banish you from my Heart. Alas! I shall have but too much Time to torment myself with this Reproach!

LET-

L E T T E R XLVI.

AH my Lord! the War is now kindled in reality; but what diverts me most is, that I shall be no longer the Victim to a disobliging Temper. That lively Passion, whose Constancy was so surprizing to all who knew the Parties interested in it, is now extinguish'd. The Adventure is very agreeable, and I will entertain you with the Particulars.

The Marquis came, this Morning, into my Apartment, with a negligent and languishing Air: His Eyes discovered the Chagrin that affected him, and I could not resist my Inclination to enquire the Cause. Madam, said he, with a very mysterious Aspect, there are some Things one would wish to conceal from one's self. This dark Expression increased my Curiosity, and I intreated him to acquaint me with the Cause of his Disquietude. What would you desire me to acknowledge, replied he? the Particulars I could impart to you, are not proper for your Attention. I have already too much Reason to reproach myself for my Conduct towards you, and I should seem inclined to insult you, were I to inform you of the Affair that disquiets me. I assured him he might proceed, without any such
Appre-

Apprehensions. I shall dispose myself to obey you, continued he, since you expect this Instance of my Complaisance.

You are sensible how sincerely I once loved you; and I was really persuaded, when I married you, that my Passion would be for ever incapable of Abatement. But tho' you presented me with every Attraction that could engage a Heart, I have not been able to guard mine against the Influence of an irregular Imagination, misled by the false Maxims of the World, and the perpetual Ensnarements of your Sex. Curiosity first inclin'd me to converse with them, in the Manner I did; and my Indolence was flatter'd, when I found them such easy Conquests. My Intercourse with them became habitual, and by degrees appeared extremely pleasing. My Reason, indeed, would frequently direct my Thoughts to you; I was sensible you was perfectly amiable, without making you that Confession; for I found myself intimidated by the Severity of your Disposition; and especially, as I was conscious I had given you the justest Cause for Complaint. The Apprehension of sustaining your Reproaches, prevented me from offering you the Satisfaction I ought to have afforded you; and the Difficulty of obtaining my Pardon, sunk me into new Irregularities. You, at last, expressed your In-

quietude

quietude at my Proceeding; but as I was then misguided by a violent Passion, the Returns you received from me, were unworthy of the Goodness with which you treated me. I thought at last, that you began to consider me with Indifference, and you have since confirm'd me in that Opinion. I am so impartial as to be sensible I deserve it; for which Reason I can never prevail upon myself to reproach you. But, I keep you all this while in Suspence. You are acquainted with the Passion I entertain'd for Lady * * *, and the Returns she has afforded me: I will even confess, that the Report which prevailed of her Disinclination to Cruelty, and the Catalogue of her Admirers, which I received from a particular Friend, were my strongest Inducements to make her a Declaration of Love. I fancied I should be able to fix her Heart, and must own that her Insensibility to all but myself, would have given me an exquisite Pleasure. I likewise foresaw, that her Rigours would be of no long Continuance; or if I should happen to be repulsed, I knew she would furnish me with those Consolations that were not to be expected from a Lady more amiable than herself. In short, I was preparing for an Affair of Fancy, rather than any real Passion. I made her my first Overtures, with the Air of a Man who did

R

not

not expect much Severity from her, and whose Flames were only his Amusement. I inform'd her of my Intentions, and it hardly cost me two Days to gain a favourable Compliance. As much acquainted with the World as I thought myself, I was insensible of the Risque a Man sustains, when he engages with Coquets; and she is certainly the most dangerous Person of all that Class; artful, beyond Expression, in the very Moments she seems to be most unguarded. Her Transports are as much studied as her Conversation; her Air, her Glances, her Sighs, and all her Motions, are the Effect of an Art which proves the more dangerous, as it is conceal'd in the Appearances of an unaffected Simplicity of Manners. I imagin'd all Commerce between us would have concluded, the Moment she left me nothing to desire; but this was the very Circumstance that inspired me with a real Passion. I then began to experience those Emotions that Love alone can create: The Gratification of my Desires awaken'd new Transports in my Soul, which I in vain endeavour'd to extinguish, by my Attention to different Pleasures. These but added new Fuel to my Flames, and contributed the more to my Intoxication. I was no longer Master of myself, but was agitated by the Passion that consum'd me, to
such

such a degree as render'd me insensible to the rest of the Sex. I withdrew from all other Enjoyments, to devote myself to her alone, and my Soul was incapable of any Idea but what she inspired : I was even so inconsiderate, as to disbelieve the Relations I had heard of her Disposition ; and the Moment I cherished a Passion for her, I imagined it impossible for me to have any Competitor in her Heart. All the Censures the World cast upon her Conduct, were considered, by me, as so many Aspersions that sprung from the Jealousy of Women, or the impertinent Remarks of young Coxcombs, who had not Merit enough to give her any Impressions in their favour. That Jealousy with which Lovers are usually affected, was unknown to me ; and I was fearful of offending her, by any Intimations of Distrust. I beheld, with a perfect Indisturbance, all the Gallants of every Class, presenting her with their Addresses ; and Things would always have proceeded in this Train, if her Coldness, which at last became too evident, had not given me just Reason to be apprehensive of her Inconstancy. I then began to be convinced that I had Rivals, but flatter'd myself that their Assiduities would be ineffectual ; and when I even perceived they were not indifferent to her, I endeavoured to persuade myself she

was only aiming at a new Proof of my Passion. I was likewise sensible there were several Conversations between the Sexes, from whence nothing of moment could be inferr'd; and that an amiable Woman is daily obliged to hear a thousand insipid Speeches that displease her, even when they flatter her Vanity; that our Sex esteem it a necessary Part of Politeness, to say a number of gallant Things that never flow from the Heart; from whence I concluded, that those Persons who were so eloquent in her Praise, were either not enamoured of her Person, or at least, were unsuccessful in their Passion. When I likewise consider'd the Number of those who besieged her, it was impossible for me to imagine they could all be happy. When I observed her Conduct, I found it perfectly uniform to all the rest of my Sex; she assumed the same Air, and repeated the same turn of Conversation, and every one of her Admirers seem'd entirely satisfied with her Proceeding; which made me conclude, that if they were all equally touched, the Indistinction of her Conduct, would naturally create Jealousy among them. As to mine, I was obliged to suspend it among such a Crowd of Adorers, for want of a proper Object to employ it upon. But how solicitous was I to deceive myself! There was not one of these Persons, who had the least Reason

Reason to be discontented with her Treatment, and they all made a gradual Advance to her Favours. Those, who had first disclosed their Passion, received the softest Testimonies of her Tenderness; and the most unfortunate among them, enjoyed such a Share of Favours, as made it evident that the last would be granted, when a commodious Opportunity appeared. How was it possible for me, to form any Suspicion of such a Conduct! Can we believe the Person we love, capable of such a contemptible Proceeding! With what Dexterity did this perfidious Woman delude me! How often, to disengage herself from my Ardours, and to gratify those of my Rivals, has she endeavour'd to persuade me that her Husband, who is the most tractable Person in the World, was jealous at my Visits; and, to ease him of his Suspicions, how frequently has she obliged me to accompany him to all Parts of the Town, that by this manner of absenting myself from his Wife, I might convince him that I had no Inclination to please her! But, it seems, she improved his Absence and mine, to the Advantage of a happy Rival, whose Pleasures I had the Goodness to facilitate. How often have I denied myself the Satisfaction of seeing her, for fear my frequent Visits should render me suspected! and when we have, at any time,

been accidentally seen together, in some retired Place, with how much Caution have I endeavour'd to secure her Reputation from Censure, when she could be capable of admitting a new Lover into her Apartment, and indulging Pleasures, which the Remembrance of her Treachery to me enhanced in her Estimation! I must confess, I was not absolutely jealous; but when I observed at last, that my Passion was not so pleasing to her as formerly, I began to be no longer certain of hers. But I was still weak enough to believe, that I had given her some Cause for the Indifference she discovered, and imagined that my treating her with an Increase of Tenderneſs, would awaken her Passion into its first Vivacity. I repeated my Viſits, Night and Morning, and my Affiduities had no Bounds; I was no longer restrain'd by the Consideration of a jealous Husband, and consequently, her Opportunities to deceive me, were not so frequent as before. But, as I did not penetrate into her Designs, any more than she could be desirous that I should suspect them, she disengaged herself from me, by meer Careſſes; she recovered her former Liberty, and restored me to my first Hopes. I was, for some time, as much enamour'd as ever, till, at last, her peculiar Conduct to the Chevalier *St. Far* *** re-kindled my Jealousy. I was weary of living

in so much Uncertainty ; and to succeed in my Intentions to discover the true State of her Heart, I concealed my Suspicions and Chagrin, in an Air of Satisfaction and Unconstraint, and had the Art to deceive her effectually.

The Chevalier had enjoyed all that can be obtained from a Woman incapable of a Refusal. They were perfectly conformable to each other, and cast about to secure a Day, when no Mortal should interrupt them. She told me the preceding Evening, that she was obliged the next Day to accompany her Husband into the Country, and was afflicted beyond Expression to be thus separated from me ; but that it was necessary for her to comply with his Desires. I seem'd to credit her Discourse ; but happening to cast my Eyes upon her, a few Moments after, I saw her Hand clasp'd in *St. Far* ***'s. I rose and took my Leave, with a Resolution to unfold this Mystery. The Day, which she imagined would be so fortunate, arrived, and a Person, in whom I placed a particular Confidence, came early in the Morning, to acquaint me that the Husband was gone out, and that he had seen the Chevalier admitted into the House, a Moment after. My Affliction, at this Account, was not so great as I expected, and I calmed it with the Hopes of avenging myself on her

Per,

Perfidy. I even conceived a malignant Joy, at the Idea of that Confusion she would discover at my Appearance, and went immediately to her House. She was so confident of my Credulity, that she had not given any Orders to her *Swiss*, relating to me. I went in, without the least Noise, in order to surprize her the more effectually. She had retired to a Pavilion, built for Pleasure, in the Garden; all the Windows, except that which fronted the House, were shut; and it happened very fortunately, that she did not observe me, when I came into the Garden. I approached the Place of her Retreat, and judged by the Silence which reigned there, that I must refer myself to their Actions, for the Discovery their Silence denied me. I employed my Eyes as well as I was able, and could not have chosen a more favourable Moment, for the Satisfaction of my Curiosity; and when you consider the Disposition with which I enter'd the Garden, you will be surprized that I should be such a calm Spectator of what pass'd between them, as I really proved. I had not the least Inclination to interrupt them, and retired from the Window, when I thought they would be in a proper Situation to see me. I quitted the Garden, in full Satisfaction at the Discovery I had made; when, to render my Joy compleat, I was
 stopp'd

stopp'd by one of her Women, whom I had gained to my Interest, and who, as she assured me, was extremely shock'd, to see her Lady's insincere and barbarous Conduct to such a Gentleman as myself. She detain'd me, till she had put into my Hands, a large Collection of Letters, which she had found Means to steal from my perfidious Fair one.

Are you not surprized at my Patience, or, more properly, my Weakness, in writing you this long and deplorable History of my Husband's Adventures? But you will pardon me, my dear Count, for I interrupted him, to have an Opportunity of assuring you, that I love you with infinite Tenderness, and should have employed my Time to more Advantage, if I had chosen this for the Subject of my Letter. I shall know, to-morrow, which of us two receives most Pleasure from this Assurance. A happy Night attend you: I am not able to write to you any longer; you may judge then how much I am fatigued.

L E T-

L E T T E R XLVII.

I Can't possibly prevail on myself to pardon you : I am now alone, as you are very sensible, and yet you neglect to visit me. How weak are all the Reasons you alledge in your Excuse ! Can they possibly ballance the Inquietude I sustain by your Absence ? Decorum, Business, and, were I inclined to be unreasonable, I would say, Duty itself, and every other Consideration, should be incapable of detaining you from me. Am I then unworthy of such a Sacrifice in my favour ? But, as much Reason as I have to accuse you, Ingrate as you are, you shall still derive some Advantage from my Solitude. Yes, I will write to you ; but, for your Punishment, you shall only receive from me, the Sequel of the History I left unfinish'd yesterday. Imagine then, that the Marquis continues his Relation in this manner.

I hurried away to my Coach, as quietly as I could ; and, to prevent Interruption in the agreeable Lecture I was preparing for my false one, I intended to pass a few Hours in the Wood of *Vincennes*. But you will never be able to guess what Object was first presented to my View, in that Solitude. It was no less than the Husband of my perfidious

dious Fair, walking very mysteriously with a Lady, who, the Moment she saw me, conceal'd her Face in the Flow of a Lawn Hood. This Sight surprized me the more, because I never suspected my good Friend to be a very fortunate Man with the Sex. He came up to me, as I was preparing to strike into another Walk. I have no Intention to dissemble with you, said he; you observe the Affair that engages me at present, be so good to me, as to conceal it from my Wife; her Jealousy drives me to Distraction, and I shall be the most unfortunate Man in the World, should she discover my Proceeding in this Place. You must likewise grant me another Favour; the Lady you see there, happens to know you, and finds herself embarrassed in your Presence. I promis'd him all the Secrecy he requested, and then retired. I was a little chagrin'd, at first, to find him so engaged, because I had an Inclination to convince him, that he had no Reason to be so apprehensive of his Spouse; and should have set him right in the Affair of her pretended Jealousy, by shewing him the Letters I had in my Possession, several of which were written to me. But I began to think it more advisable to let him continue in his Error; and, as I had been deceived so egregiously, I was willing he should sustain the same Fate. When I
came

came to examine the Letters I had received, I found a strange Diversity of Style : Some were filled with warm Declarations and Acknowledgments, from little Fops ; others amused me with the Languors and proffer'd Services of an Officer in the Revenue ; and a third Parcel expressed the fluttering Fondness of a Courtier. The Variety, in short, was infinite, and I could have diverted myself extremely, if some of my Letters, which made part of the Collection, had not render'd the others less ridiculous. When I had finish'd my Reading, I found my charming Mistress neither inspired me with Love or Resentment ; and, if I except a slight Emotion of Self-Regard, which mortified me a few Moments, I may venture to say, that I behaved like a Man of Philosophy upon this Occasion, and was surprized to find myself so little affected at her Levity ; for I had not then consider'd, that Tenderness is naturally extinguished by Contempt. I recollected the Disposition I was in, when I made her the first Declaration, and resolved to assume an Air of Tranquillity, that I might not seem to be her Dupe, in such an Adventure as this. I was willing, however, to have the Satisfaction of casting her into some Confusion ; and, as I imagined a Letter would not be sufficient to accomplish my Design, I determin'd to arm my-

self

self
and
her
ceec
I no
inst
We
the
wou
paid
ther
gen
Cha
part
had
Lar
dev
whe
her
form
ning
mak
posu
from
seen
that
tion
not
The
with
sterc

self with a most insulting Air of Coldness,
 and present her with my Congratulations on
 her new Conquests. I thought this Pro-
 ceeding the best of any, as I was sensible
 I no longer loved her, and was certain, that,
 instead of disclosing to her any Instance of
 Weakness in our Interview, I should enjoy
 the utmost Satisfaction in the Confusion she
 would discover. With this Disposition I
 paid her a Visit the next Morning: She was
 then at her Toilet, in that amiable Negli-
 gence, which is so advantageous to a Lady's
 Charms. I found the Chevalier in her A-
 partment, and the Presence of her Lover
 had soften'd her Eyes into such a melting
 Languish as was almost irresistible, though
 devoted to a Rival. She blushed a little
 when she beheld me, and I approached
 her in my usual manner. She had been in-
 form'd of the Visit I intended her the Eve-
 ning before, and imagined I now came to
 make her some little Reproaches. The Com-
 posure in which I appeared, recovered her
 from her first Confusion; and, as she had not
 seen me in the Garden, she took it for granted
 that she had likewise escaped my Observa-
 tion. She then began to excuse herself, for
 not acquainting me with her being at home.
 The Chevalier, upon this, thought fit to
 withdraw. I was very much indisposed ye-
 sterday, said she, and could not accompany
 S my

my Husband into the Country, and I should have been offended with you for not staying, when you came here, if the Disorder in my Head had not stupified me into a Sleep the whole Day! Sleep, replied I very gravely, is not to be found fault with, provided one enjoys agreeable Dreams. I have no Cause to complain in that Particular, said she, since you was the only Subject of my Dreams. I then retorted with a Smile, I am told Madam, by some Persons who take an Account of your Dreams, that the Chevalier contributed to their Agreeableness, much more than myself: But I can't complain of that Circumstance, because I am sensible we have not the Command of our Ideas when we sleep. Let me intreat you not to blush, continued I, but is it possible you should sleep the whole Day? Extremely possible, replied she, with an easy Air. I have likewise had my Dreams, said I, and you really had a large Share in them. I will acquaint you with the Particulars, for they are extremely entertaining.

I dreamt, that when you was seized with the Sleep you mention, you fancied yourself to be in the Pavilion, in the Garden; and that in those Moments when you was infinitely delighted with dreaming of me, the Chevalier accidentally came in, and made it his first Employment to shut all the Windows,

dows, except one that was necessary to give a View of those Persons who should happen to come into the Garden; and that when you asked him the Reason of these Precautions, he fell upon his Knees before you, and discomposed you to that degree, that my Idea vanished from your Remembrance; and, what was very extraordinary, as you continued to cast your Eyes on the Chevalier, you imagined him to be myself, tho' he was really the same Chevalier as ever: That amidst this Disposition of your Thoughts, you entertain'd him with all the Tenderneſs you used to reſerve for me; and obſerving that he diſcovered ſome Timidity, you condeſcended to recall him from his Confuſion by the ſoſteſt Careſſes, and animated him to enjoy the Felicity of your Ardours, till at laſt he yielded to his Tranſports, with which you kindly intermixed your own, not comprehending, as yet, by what Miracle I had been able to aſſume the Perſon of the Chevalier, in that tender Moment. To what Purpoſe, ſaid you to yourſelf, does he appear to me in that Form? I never lov'd the Chevalier; and this is a very improper Expedient to engage my Conformity to his Deſires; and yet by a ſurprizing Impulſe of my Tenderneſs to him, I afford him my Favours, even while he aſſumes a Form that I always diſliked. You

then made several judicious Reflections on the peculiar Oddness of Dreams, and the ridiculous Ideas they infuse into the Imagination. I likewise dreamt, that when you at last awaked from your Slumber, you was not a little alarmed at the imaginary Injustice with which you had treated me in your Sleep, and you declared your Abhorrence of that Irregularity of Fancy, by which you was influenced in those Moments. After which you sunk down in a second Slumber, and dreamt over the same Scene five or six times, till at last you started up in a very abrupt manner, to shake off the impertinent Perceptions which had so long discomposed you: But, even then you conceived such Impressions from your Dream, that you still continued to see me in the Form of the Chevalier. I awaked too at the same time, in the utmost Vexation, that I had dreamt of so many extravagant Particulars.

I shall not pretend to represent the Emotions I raised in my perfidious Mistress, by this fine Relation, since the utmost Power of Language is incapable of expressing 'em. Rage, Shame, and Aversion spread themselves, in their strongest Complexion, over her Features. Artifice was no longer availing, and I beheld her with an Air so expressive of my Contempt, that it was impossible

fible
She
since
had
Wha
Wer
be a
any I
effect
your
I affi
that
can
you
them
Inter
ackn
and
nishe
woul
me.
that
migh
you
porta
to co
other
some
say t
that
migh

fible for her to be deceived in my Meaning. She found it in vain to deny the Charge, since she had so much Reason to believe I had been the Spectator of her Conduct. What should a Lady do in such a Situation? Were she to intreat my Pardon, that would be a Condescension too mortifying; and any Denial of the Fact would be entirely ineffectual. Have you Time enough upon your Hands, to hear my Answer? said she. I assured her I had. You have then seen all that passed, replied the Lady; and nothing can be less a Dream than the Particulars you have related. I might have denied them, had I been so disposed; but I have no Intention to give myself that Trouble. I acknowledge my Passion for the Chevalier, and am charmed that your Curiosity has furnished you with a Discovery, which you would otherwise have soon received from me. You would have compelled me to that Confession, as much Inclination as I might have to preserve a Decorum with you; for you are really become so insupportable to me, that it is impossible for me to constrain my Thoughts any longer. Another, perhaps, would endeavour to form some Excuse; but all that I can, at present, say to you, is, that I love the Chevalier, and that you will for ever be my Aversion. You might have been sensible of this before; for

I have given you sufficient Proofs of my perfect Indifference, in hopes that you would reserve for some other Object, the disagreeable Affiduities with which you are desirous to honour me. But, since I have now made you such a sincere Confession, I flatter myself that I shall have the Happiness never to see you hereafter; and indeed I think that Happiness so great, that I am only concerned I did not secure it much sooner. Adieu, my Lord; I once more assure you that I love the Chevalier. And is he the only Person you love, Madam? replied I. I will love a hundred more, retorted she, if that will afford you any Satisfaction; but you will never be one of that Number; and therefore let us break off here, and part for ever. I must confess, this uncommon Effrontery struck me dumb with Astonishment. I imagined I should mortify her, by making her sensible I had beheld the Scene of her Perfidy: But she answer'd me in such a Tone, as threw me into as much Confusion as she herself ought to have experienced. I thought it would be to no purpose to shew her the Letters I had brought, with an Intention to confound her the more, and contented myself with taking my final Leave of her, in the most contemptible Air I could assume. I must confess, I was a little piqued at her Insensibility of my Scorn, and resolved to inform the Persons who had writ the Let-

ters to her which were in my Possession, that she had sacrific'd them all to me. That Proceeding, indeed, would not have been agreeable to the Rules of strict Sincerity ; but I thought myself priviledg'd, at that Time, to give a Loose to my Resentment : Not that her perfidious Conduct created me any real Chagrin, but I was willing to avenge myself for the Contempt with which she had treated me in our last Conversation. The first Person I happen'd to meet, was *St. Far****. I was sensible he had profess'd a violent Passion for your Friend Lady *** ; and as I did not then know, that all Commerce between them was broke off, I was surprized he should choose such a Time, to discover his Inconstancy to her. I had observed indeed, that he had been lately very much attached to the celebrated Lady *L**** ; but it seems he had quitted her for my false Fair one ; tho' when I first saw him at her House, I had no Suspicion that he had plac'd himself in the Train of her Admirers. I imagined some little Flights of Caprice had passed between your Friend and him, which had discontinued their Interviews for some short Time : And, as I was acquainted with their mutal Passion, I concluded that his Thoughts were rather turn'd to an Accommodation with her, than to any new Passion. Instead of suspecting him to be my Rival, I considered him as a Man affected with

that Chagrin, which is commonly experienced in the Suspension of an agreeable Intercourse; and that he had an Inclination to amuse himself by visiting his Friends. You are sensible how much I was deceived in my Opinion. I have already told you, that I had an Intention to do my Fair one a malicious Office with my Rivals. *St. Far* *** was the first who came in my Way, and I thought he appeared very melancholy for a Man of his good Fortune. May I ask you, said I, why you retired so abruptly from the Lady's Apartment? I imagined, when I saw you enter, replied he with a negligent Air, that you might have some Affairs to settle with her, and I withdrew, to give you an Opportunity of accomplishing your Design. Such a Proceeding, return'd I, might be natural in a Friend; but it appears very extraordinary in a Rival. I your Rival? cry'd he with some Vehemence, is it possible then that you should be in Love with Lady ***? Yes certainly, said I; and if you had not known it, I should not have received such an Answer from you. Hear me then, replied he: There are different manners of being in love, and only one that is agreeable to her Taste. I concluded your Attachment to her was the Effect of the easy Reception she afforded you, as well as of your natural Indolence, which prevents
your

your Attention to other Amusements; and I had no Reason to believe, when I saw you so well with her, that you were engaged in any Circumstances of much Delicacy, because I am very sensible they are her Aversion.

I should, however, have paid a Deference to your Pleasures, if she had not been desirous of engaging me in such an Intercourse, as I could not be unpolite enough to decline. I came into it, however, with Inclinations very different from Love, and should certainly have made some Progress in the Affair, if the Intimation you have now given me, did not oblige me to resign my Pretensions. She has not granted you any Favours then, as yet? said I, with an ironical Smile. She has given me Reason to entertain sufficient Hopes, replied he; but they are the least of my Concern. I have not, as yet, found my Passion for her strong enough to render me impatient: The World is so full of these Coquets; they are so little engaging; we come after so many Predecessors in their Affection, and are succeeded by such a Number of Gallants, as happy in their Favours as ourselves, that when a Woman of this Character invites one to an Amour, it is impossible to make one's self the least Compliment upon one's good Fortune, and we are obliged to consider ourselves as the Instruments

struments of a contemptible Woman's Caprice. I may infer, then, from these judicious Observations, answer'd I, that you entirely resign Lady *** to me, without having made the least Improvement of her Inclinations in your favour. This indeed is a Circumstance that ennobles the Sacrifice you make me: For had she yesterday gratified your utmost Desires, I might suppose you only resigned her to me now, because she had no more Charms to engage you any longer. Why do you make such a Supposition? cry'd he in some Surprize; I have only received from Lady *** some Assurances of an approaching Happiness; which, as yet, I have not been very solicitous to obtain. As I am entirely prepossessed with another Passion, and devote all my Attention to a Heart, whose Loss I exceedingly regret, I have complied with the Overtures tender'd me by this Lady, with no other View than to create an Impression of Jealousy, in the Object I have lost. But I am very unfortunate in my Experiments; I have left Lady L*** for Lady ***, without creating the least Mortification where I intended, and find myself of so little Consequence, as neither to give Pain, nor receive Pity. These indeed are dreadful Misfortunes, said I, and I can never sufficiently applaud Lady ***, for endeavour-

ing,

ing, yesterday, to afford you some Consolation. The happy Pavilion, where you received so many Instances of her obliging Disposition — has been the Scene of the same Complaisance to many others, interrupted he very smartly. You have detain'd me here two full Hours, to let me know that she had an Inclination to pass the Day with me; and I shall tell you, in two Moments, that she will never receive another Visit from me. I had some Curiosity, and have gratified it effectually. I shall contribute, not a little, to your Satisfaction, by resolving to see her no more; and, believe me, I will oblige you, in that Particular, with all my Heart. I would advise you, however, to conduct yourself by my Example; for I really think her unworthy the Pursuit of any Gentleman. This is what I intend, replied I; but I am piqued, and have been betray'd, which is not your Case. I can't be satisfied without some Vengeance; and I think I have the Means to accomplish it. I have here all sorts of Letters, which inform me of the Names and Quality of my present Rivals. I have an Inclination to send them back to the Gentlemen who writ 'em, or at least to circulate them thro' the Town. And, to carry on some Part of my Project, I here return you all yours, and shall forgive all Aggravations of Ridicule, in Gratitude

titude to your Sincerity. And, what can you propose from a Revenge of this nature? said he. To see her reduced to the Necessity of loving her Husband for some time, answer'd I, and to have no Opportunity of deceiving any Man for the future. What need have I to entertain you with any more Particulars, Madam, continued the Marquis: my Project has succeeded beyond my Expectation: I have embroiled her with all the World, and she is sensible she owes this good Office to my Industry. I can now declare to you, that I am as much delighted with her Aversion, as ever I was with her imaginary Tendernefs. But nothing has so much incensed her, as the Conduct of *Sir Far****, who has effected a Reconciliation with your Friend, and abandoned my fair Deceiver, the very Day that succeeded the Happiness she afforded him.

What can she now think of her Charms! What a mortifying Event is this for her imperious Vanity! and how well do her present Sufferings compensate the Pangs she once caused me to sustain! Heavens, how I hate her! Don't be so certain of that, reply'd I, you are exasperated at present, and this mighty Emotion of Hatred, may be only a strong Indication of Love. You despise her, and I think you are to be commended; but Contempt alone does not al-

way

ways extinguish a violent Passion : We may regret our Choice, and be sensible of it, in all its Horrors ; but when we are acted upon, by a stronger Impulse than we receive from Reason, we adore our Chains in the very Moments we detest them. You still seem to be in a very incommodious Situation ; and to what Censures will you expose yourself, should you resolve to see her again ? Perhaps she herself would be delighted to bring you to a new Engagement, in order to enslave you more severely than ever. You have acquainted me with your Thoughts, without Reserve, and I ought to express myself to you, with the same Sincerity ; for which Reason, I tender you those Counsels that are altogether disinterested. As you have brought the Affair to such an Extremity, it would be very indecent, in you, to visit her any more ; for those Persons who have been Witnesses to the Rupture between you, will think your Reconciliation unpardonable. Should you renew your Commerce with her, you will infallibly be the Jest of the whole Town. You have habituated yourself to Love ; and I have nothing to say upon that Subject ; but I wish you would preserve yourself from Ridicule. I acknowledge the Force of your Reasons, replied the Marquis ; I am satiated with Love, and will never expose myself to the Necessity

sity of making you my Confident, in such odious Affairs as this. They cost me too dear, and I can't conceive how you could be able to extort this Confession from me. I would not depreciate the Confidence you repose in me, said I; but you may take it for granted, that the Publick is never silent at such Adventures as these. I have been already inform'd of all you have now told me, with a small Variation of Circumstances. We had some other Discourse together, and he retired, after eating a very moderate Supper; having first intreated me, when I found my Heart more disposed in his favour, to honour him with the Tidings; for he assured me he would endeavour to deserve them, and added all that could be said by a Man who thinks himself compleatly happy in the Tenderness of his Wife. — Gracious Heavens! would you imagine that I have employed five Hours, in writing to you? To what a Length have I drawn out this Letter, without one soft Expression in your favour! But this is a small Omission, since you already know how passionately I love you. Adieu; be sure to visit me this Evening, if you possibly can. As diverting as a Husband may be, he is infinitely exceeded by a Lover. Does not this convince you, that I have forgot all my Resentment?

LET.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

I Was sensible, that if I had an Inclination to make a new Conquest, I should cause some Captive of your Sex to sigh. My Charms have had their Effect, and I am adored beyond Expression. The Ardours I now receive, are very different from yours. You military Gentlemen, who imagine your Pretensions to the Fair, are not to be contested, treat us with the same Barbarity you practise in a Town you take by Storm, and refuse our languishing Virtue the Glory of a short Resistance. You have no Relish for any little Anxieties, and expect that your Merit, and our Frailty, should secure you all the Gratifications you desire. But for once, you must let Arms pay their Homage to the Gown. Prepare for a Retreat, good Colonel, for I have made such Impressions on a little Magistrate, who is so gentle and obsequious, that upon a proper Occasion, he will be able to erase the late *Celadon* from my Remembrance : He has even assured me, that if he had but the happy Power to please me, he would for ever devote himself to my Service, in spite of the Flame that consumes him. He has not, as yet, presumed to fix his Eyes directly upon me, and no Mortal, but so dangerous a Rival as himself, could

have banish'd you from my Heart. You think yourself too amiable, ever to lose your Ascendant over it; and yet you see, that all your Security depends upon the Heart of a Woman. Mine yielded at the first Menace; and, how could I refuse it to a Man who promised me an eternal Respect? Can there be any thing more seducing than such an Offer? He sigh'd, and cry'd I love you, with such an Air of Modesty, and blushed so innocently when he utter'd this Confession, that if any one had seen my imperious Mien, and the Timidity of my Magistrate, I should really have been taken for the Aggressor. I can likewise assure you, that this Youth is Master of many amiable Qualities. Do you imagine that he sits at my Toilet, with his Arms a-crofs, like yourself, and can only exercise his Criticisms on my Ribbons, or disconcert, by his Follies, the Care that is taken to adjust my Hair? I can assure you that he visits me, with other Views. Believe me, a Senator can employ his Time to a better Purpose. There is not a President of any Court of Justice, who can plait ones Hair, to more Advantage than himself. He can form a Lock into a flowing Curl, at the same time that he makes one a Declaration of Love; and this is certainly a sufficient Accomplishment. He is my Council, in all my intricate Affairs; his Taste is wonderful,

ful, and, were he disposed to derive any Advantage from his Talents, he might value himself for his Capacity to furnish admirable Designs, for the Improvement of our Silks. Our Courts of Justice are excellent Schools, to form a Man for the polite World; and you may justly conclude, that the Qualifications he has acquired, will infatuate all the Ladies, and extinguish the severest Virtues of our Sex: He will certainly supplant every Gentleman, who resolves to be successful in his Sighs; he will dissolve the most intimate Union of Hearts, and can never fail to create Jealousy in those Lovers who are most confident of their Merit, unless he limits his Ambition to the Pleasure of saying, your Ladyship was never dressed to more Advantage! How exquisite is his Taste! But, I am so generous as to acquaint you with all the Qualifications of your Rival, to make you the more sensible that the Wound he has given me, is incurable; and that you may cease to indulge an unfortunate Passion, which I can no longer approve. Let us forbear then to carry Things to any farther Extremis; it would be imprudent in us, to exhaust the Fondness of our Hearts; we shall meet with more Satisfaction for the future, when we have left ourselves some remaining Desires to gratify. Our Union has, more than once, been in Danger of Extinction,

from Satiety ; and our Endeavours to renew it, have almost proved ineffectual. The Impressions we have retained, have render'd us more unhappy than those Persons who have no Sensibility of Love. I am convinced of this Truth, and we never ought to see each other, till we are perfectly indolent. A little Perfidy is a Refinement of Love, and that Passion grows languid, when we cease to be apprehensive of its Success.

B I L L E T.

Any Answer to your Letter would be unnecessary : You have not requested any thing from me, and declare yourself to be perfectly satisfied. I would willingly congratulate you, on the Pleasures you enjoy ; but Compliments are a little perplexing. A Letter would be too long ; and I can hardly think you will believe this Billet too short. Your Attention is too much engaged, to give me an Opportunity of declaring that I love you ; and you are too amiable, to make it possible for me to say, you are indifferent to me. I have not Resolution enough to reproach you, and am equally incapable of presenting you with my Thanks. You may suppose, from all these Circumstances, that I now write to you, without knowing what I do. You tell me, that were it not for my Idea, which is inseparable from your Imagination, your Inquietudes would overwhelm

whelm you. I tender you my Acknowledgments for that Honour; but, I believe, my Generosity will equal yours, when I declare, that my Thoughts of you, discompose me not a little. You inform me, that you converse with amiable Ladies; but, would you have that Opinion of them, if your Thoughts were only devoted to me? The Men I daily see, are so exceedingly disagreeable! But the Women you pass your Time with, are perfectly charming: You desire no other Satisfaction, and I happen to be absent. I had some Inclination to reproach you; but you are not worthy of my Jealousy. You tell me, that you shall continue where you are, long enough to write me three Letters; but I shall never pardon you for any of 'em, except that which informs me of your Return.

L E T T E R XLIX.

WE are to take a Tour into the Country to-morrow: The judicious Marquis has an Inclination to make you one of the Party, and is now preparing to engage you. I shall then have the Pleasure of seeing you, and may converse with you, every Moment of that delightful Time. Does your Impatience correspond with mine? Do you wait for those Days, with the Impressions I experience? Do you really desire them; and can you, without any Disgust, behold yourself

self in the Presence of a Woman who adores
 you? Does your Ability to impart such
 thrilling Transports, affect you with the Joy
 you ought to derive from that Power? I
 love you, beyond the Possibility of the war-
 mest Passion: But, you may imagine I am
 lost in extravagant Thoughts, while I am
 persuading myself, that I am unable to pre-
 sent you with all the Endearments you me-
 rit. The Offer of my very Soul, is too in-
 considerable to satisfy my Sollicitude to please
 you: You are the absolute Lord of all its
 Powers; and yet I still imagine my Flame
 too languid. To what Unhappiness am I
 fated! Amidst a Passion, that ought to be se-
 rene, I am forming Desires that are never
 to be compleated! My Passion glows into
 Madness; no Consideration has Power to
 calm it, and every Circumstance contributes
 to its Increase. You appear equally amiable
 to me, in your Transports and Indifference;
 and, as if the Conflict I sustain in the Day
 were insufficient, I am even seduced by
 blissful Slumbers. What soft Illusions! What
 charming Nights! What unutterable Rap-
 tures do I experience! And if your mere Idea
 can diffuse such Disorder, through all my
 Senses, what Joys should I not derive from
 your Presence! You could not possibly accuse
 me of Insensibility, in those happy Moments:
 But you must not expect to be conscious of
 any

any Delights that equal mine. These transporting Pleasures flow from the Excess of my Passion : You languish in a Profusion of the softest Felicity, and I burn, when only your Idea is presented to my Imagination. Why are not your Raptures as intense as mine ! But, let me rather say, Why do I reproach you in this manner ? Into what Extreams do I suffer myself to be hurried by my Emotions ? What a Number of Words have I employed, in telling you we are to make a Party of Pleasure ; and how can I fill so much Paper, when I have so little to write ? How loquacious are we made by Love ! I am resolved to think no more of it. My Thoughts begin to grow distracted ; would to Heaven they were not too much so already — Good Morrow. — Ah ! I forgot to acquaint you, that the Marquis, who is this moment paying his Assiduities to Lady T * * *, has desired me to engage her to be one of our Company ; and there is Reason to believe she will engross his Thoughts so effectually, that he will not be very attentive to our Conduct ; but you must not think this Circumstance will discharge you from all Caution in your Behaviour, Lady T * * * will be accompanied by a Number of Women, who call themselves my best Friends ; but who, for all that, would not be displeased, were I to furnish them with
any

any little Opportunities of making me the Subject of their Detractions. Adieu, and remember to be prudent, in the Presence of these good People; I should rather say, endeavour to prevent me from being indiscreet: I may possibly be more so, than you desire, in our Moments of Unconstraint. Adieu, my dear Count.

B I L L E T.

*No more Extravagancies, or we shall infallibly come to a Rupture: I can no longer avoid it, for your Conduct grows insupportable. What, in the Name of Heaven, is a Lover? I am resolved to define the Character, though I should happen to displease you. A Lover, then, is one who acts a very ridiculous Part. I could not prevail on myself to be angry, yesterday, merely for the sake of asking pardon to-day. Count *** whispered in my Ear; can you guess what Business he had there? He acquainted me with an impertinent Affair; would you know the Particulars? He inform'd me — but you shan't have it in a Letter, for I will tell it you at our next Meeting. Are you not desirous of a Reconciliation with me? I am sensible you are ashamed of your impatient Temper, and you have reason to be so; but I am not certain whether I shall have Time to*
see

see you. You may come, however; for I have nothing to do, and perhaps your Company may amuse me. How ridiculous am I to be so good! This is something incredible; but a Reconciliation is a very agreeable Affair.

L E T T E R L.

I Would advise you to change your Opinion; for, if I am not very much deceiv'd, *St. Far****'s Repentance is ineffectual. You fancy his Pardon must needs flow from the Tendernefs Lady *** formerly entertain'd in his favour; but the Cruelty, with which that Tendernefs has been treated, has extinguish'd it for ever. The Patience of Lovers has its Limits: Little Frailties may be disregarded, but a delicate Soul suffers by dispensing frequent Forgiveness. A Moment's Resentment draws on a Train of Reflections; and though they are usually erased by Love, a new Injury revives them in all their Severity: The Heart grows languid; Reason begins to resume her Empire; and, when she has once regain'd it, Love can no longer banish her from her Throne. Consider how a Passion is created in the Hearts of our Sex, and how different you must appear from yourselves, to induce our Compliance with your Desires. What a Strain of Tendernefs and
obsc.

obsequious Respect do you discover, to arrive at that Moment which gives you a Privilege to disclose your natural Disposition! With what Rigours do you overwhelm us, when you have no longer any to apprehend from our Conduct! And, to what an abject Slavery do you reduce us, when the Proofs you have received of our Tendernefs, should render you more amiable and assiduous, than you appear'd when we were inflexible to your Desires! How can you imagine that a Lady, who has been accustomed to your Addresses, and all the engaging Arts which your Sollicitude, to soften her Insensibility, suggests to your Imagination, can pardon your capricious Treatment; your imperious Airs; your false and dishonourable Jealousies, which you only affect, with a View to conceal your Coldness, when your Passion is once fatiated? Why would you have her persist in her Affection, for one who no longer has an Inclination to be amiable, and compell her to a Constancy you cease to merit, and which you would only create, to render her the Object of your Contempt? You, undoubtedly, will not agree to these Truths; and, would to Heaven that, in order to disclaim them, you did not resemble the Men I have been describing! You will assure me of your Fidelity, and you may possibly be Master of that Accomplishment; but you resemble

those

those Prudes, who are perpetually boasting their Virtue, but are not the more approv'd for that Declaration. You are not anxious to please others; but, at the same time, you discover no Inclination to be agreeable to me. You are incommoded with your Constancy; I am perpetually sensible of the ill Humour it creates you, and you make me pay dear for the Pleasure of beholding myself without a Rival. But I must return to *St. Far* *** (for I can't conceive, how you came to be the Subject of all these Expostulations) I fancy you deceive yourself, when you suppose Lady *** has any Inclination to renew a Correspondence with him. You and I have been privy to their Passion, and have almost been constantly employed in excusing the Extravagancies of *St. Far* ***, and have frequently been reduced to condemn the indiscreet Affection of the Lady our Friend. *St. Far* *** has been guilty of an Injustice in this Rupture, which he can only repair, by an immediate Acknowledgment: But, instead of condescending so far, he has added the most injurious Inconstancy to his other Crime. But, as her new Conquests have now made him sensible of her Merit, he is impatient to regain her Favour. This is a Circumstance very much to her Honour, and should teach her to set a just Estimation on herself. Perhaps this very Con-

U

viction

viction has given *St. Far**** a Disgust to his Inconstancy. He knows, there are some Women disposed to love him; but is sensible, at the same time, that they are undeserving of any Return, and that there are Hearts whose Conquest affords but little Satisfaction. In a word, Lady*** may hope to regain a Lover more tender, and better persuaded of her Merit, than he was before his Change. All these Reflections are just; but she continues inexorable. She has not only refused to receive his Letters, but has been entirely unaffected with his languishing Air. You amorous Men are surely the most diverting Creatures in the World. A continued Affectation reigns through your whole Persons, even to the Tone of your Voices. Your Eyes are overcast with Langours, and are ever directing their melancholy Glances to the beloved Object. Your spiritless Steps seem, at every pace, to reproach her with some new Rigour: Your long and frequent Sighs, your broken Slumbers, your Disorder and Distractions (and oh! these are an essential Article) tend to prove, that you are no longer Masters of yourselves. These were the Allurements by which you seduced me; for the more I reflect on your Distractions, they appear so extremely powerful, that I forget each Particular I ought to remember. I was once so
 absurd

absur
 rous,
 Reaf
 this
 bit o
 a fin
 all th
 port,
 was
 tal M
 been
 bega
 Affa
 a na
 preh
 shou
 she
 Gen
 Wh
 suffe
 App
 tem
 S
 Ma
 nior
 his
 ceiv
 disc
 in h
 diff
 see

absurd, as to believe you exceedingly amorous, because you seem'd to have lost your Reason ; but I have since been sensible, that this is only a Vice which springs from Habit or Constitution. Dejection affords you a fine Resource ; you appear disconsolate to all the World ; and 'tis now the general Report, that a certain Gentleman, whose Gaiety was once so applauded, is seized with a mortal Melancholy. These Tidings have even been conveyed to the Lady he loves, and she began to consider his Condition as a serious Affair. She was sensible that Affliction was a natural Advance to Despair, and was apprehensive lest his inconsiderate Behaviour should grow too remarkable ; till at last she thought it better to preserve a poor Gentleman, than be necessary to his Death. What unfortunate Creatures are our Sex, to suffer ourselves to be seduced by ridiculous Appearances that ought to create our Contempt !

St. Far *** appears to Lady *** , like a Man abandon'd to Despair ; and, in my Opinion, she seems to be entirely unaffected with his Condition. Perhaps her Heart may deceive her ; but, however that may be, I can't discover in it any Symptom of Tenderneſs in his favour. She speaks of him with Indifference ; but I should be better pleased to see her moved with Resentment. I will intercede

tercede for him once more, since you desire it; but it is not easy for you to conceive how much an Inconstant, who would resume his former Chains, is despised by a Woman of Understanding: Besides, his manner of answering you, when you offer'd to introduce him to her, is a Circumstance that is seldom forgotten. I am now preparing to visit her, and you will find me in her Apartment, where we will join our Endeavours to obtain his Pardon. As to your Particular, I would advise you always to love me in such a manner, as to have no Cause to desire my Forgiveness.

L E T T E R L I.

A Certain Lady is retiring to Solitude, disgusted with the Flutter of the Town: But, how can she forsake it with Satisfaction, when she leaves the dearest Object of her Soul! To prevent this Mortification, you are desired to be at home at five, with Monsieur *St. Far****; and you will have an Opportunity of being conducted to a Place you are unacquainted with at present; and the Name of it is not to be disclosed to you. It may be proper, however, to inform you, that you are to engage in some terrible Adventures; but you are a Knight,
and

and profess to be amorous, and consequently can never be destitute of Courage. After you have pass'd thro' an immense Country, you will be conveyed to a Castle, which a single Giant, of the Canton of *Bern*, renders inaccessible to all splenetic Persons. A stately Portico will first present itself to your View; but when you have admired the Architecture, in compliance with the established Custom on such Occasions, you may make a farther Advance; for neither Monsters nor Griffons will oppose your Passage, and you are not to begin your Feats of Arms in the Court of the Castle. A Number of courteous Knights will conduct you, in Ceremony, to a Range of splendid Apartments, where a Set of young Damsels will perfume you, and direct your Steps to a mysterious Cabinet, where you will be received by two Princesses, more radiant than the Stars in the Firmament, and reposing themselves, with a negligent Air, on Sofas glittering with Gold and Purple. At the sight of you, a soft Confusion will tinge their Cheeks with the finest Vermilion in the World, and diffuse new Charms over all their Features. After a few Sighs, which their enraptur'd Hearts will breathe with some Reluctance, a Lilly Hand will be tender'd to you, with a languishing Air, and you must not fail to kiss it with Transport. In the mean time, a

Flow of Joy will suspend all the Faculties of your Soul, and you will be permitted, in a very obliging manner, to utter all the incoherent Expressions that occur to you, till you have recovered yourself from your first Emotions. When this painful Preliminary is over, you will be conducted into delightful Gardens, which Art and Nature have conspired to embellish. An eternal Spring reigns in that soft Retreat; there the Zephyrs perpetually breathe a delicious Air, while the Nightingales chant their melodious Loves, and, in conjunction with the Warbling of the other Inhabitants of blooming Forrests, render this charming Scene a second Isle of *Venus*. Amidst a thick Wood, that deepens into a pleasing Gloom, you will discover a Grotto, more lovely than all the other Beauties of that amiable Solitude, and cover'd with twining Myrtle. There the *Fauns* resort, to enjoy the uninterrupted Solace of all their Sighs. The amorous *Dryad* permits herself to be surprized, without sustaining the least Apprehensions. An Enchantment, which can never be sufficiently admired, makes the fugitive Nymph incapable of directing her Speed to any other Place; and Love, who glides before her, and dazzles her Eyes with his beamy Torch, conducts her to the very Grotto she would avoid. The Infantas, in all probability,
being

being
desiro
ster'd
may
The S
mate
it ma
cretio
into t
to pr
who,
leave
Whe
fence
you
Deli
be n
Win
rent
vite
deav
as i
you
riot
Ho
lon
Ga
of
yo
the
utt

being fatigued with their long Walk, will be desirous to repose themselves in that sequester'd Scene: There you and *St. Far* *** may disclose to them the Pangs you sustain. The Sight of that charming Retreat will animate your Desires; and Heaven grant that it may inspire the Lovers with as much Discretion, as it may possibly infuse Weakness into the Ladies; and may they, at least, learn to profit by the Example of those Swains, who, when they quitted that Grot, did not leave in it any Monuments of their Felicity. When you retire from that Place, your Presence will be desired in a noble Hall, where you will find a Table covered with all the Delicacies that Imagination can represent to be most exquisite; and a Flow of the richest Wines will sparkle in Vases more transparent than Chrystal: Gay *Frenzy* will be invited to the Festival, and *Bacchus* will endeavour to finish it with as much Perfection as it was begun by *Love*. But, as soon as you discover the Dawn of *Aurora*, the Charioteers will be order'd to prepare their Horses: You will then depart; and, after a long Journey, will find yourselves at the Gates of *Paris*. There you will take leave of the *Infantas*, not without some Sighs on your part, and they will be as liberal of theirs. One of you two will be obliged to utter Protestations of Constancy, from which
the

the other will, at present, be dispensed. You will then ascend your Car, and, before *Morpheus* sheds his Poppies on your Eye-lids, you will talk of the Object of your Flame, and address a mental Prayer to her, as you ought. Adieu my Lord.

B I L L E T.

Return to this Place. You are not worthy of an Invitation from me ; for which reason I am only discharging the Office of a Secretary ; but don't you imagine that Love dictates the least Endearment for you. I once more assure you, that I am not writing for myself. 'Tis true, I might make use of the Opportunity ; but I am not sufficiently satisfied with you, to have Recourse to any such Pretext. You doubtless imagine that I am discomposed at your Absence ; you may think so, if you please, and be deceived at the same time. I go where my Inclinations lead me, am attentive to all I hear, and answer what I think fit. I divert myself at Play, and am a Loser. I go to the Theatre, and am dissatisfied. I have Lovers, capable of amusing me, if I am so disposed. Are not these fine Resources ; and can you believe that while I enjoy them, I can have any Time to be desirous of your Return ? I likewise see my Husband

every

every Day : He loves me beyond Conception; and, whatever you may think, a sedentary Husband is preferable to an absent Lover. The Signification of all this is, that you may continue where you are, if the Nuptials of Lady *** and St. Far *** don't oblige you to quit your Solitude. She has form'd this Resolution at last, and hopes to fix St. Far *** entirely by this Proceeding : You may frame a Judgment of her Indiscretion, by this Instance. If the Oaths of a Lover are of no Validity ; of what consequence are those of a Husband ? She promises herself much Fidelity, Complaisance, and Tenderness from him ; and, though these Expectations were all disappointed in her former Marriage, she is willing to believe St. Far *** will not be defective in the least Particular. Adieu, my Lord ; the Nuptials are to be celebrated next Monday, and all the Company will be very well satisfied to see you arrive in the Evening. You may visit me when it suits with your Conveniency ; but, however, you shall not tax me with being incommodious to you ; and will you now say, that I love you ?

L E T-

L E T T E R LII.

AH me! my Apprehensions were but too justly founded, and how happy should I now be, had they always guarded me against your Desires! Do you yourself then confirm to me, the Certainty I had of losing you, which cost me so many Tears, and from which you endeavour'd to relieve me, by such numberless Protestations! Can you consent to abandon me, Ingrate as you are! Have you considered what your Barbarity will cost me, and are you resolved to kill me with agonizing Despair? Could you so soon forget the Tenderneſs with which I adored you? You are determin'd to espouse Lady G***; Inhuman Man! And I am reduced to the Neceſſity of loſing you, without daring to complain of your Perſidy. But why am I not to be inform'd of my Fate from your Lips? Do you want Reſolution to acquaint me with your Happineſs; and, tho' it will infallibly deprive me of mine, can you be ſo unjuſt to me, as to believe I will not ſacrifice it all to your Welfare? My Heart has never reproached me on your Account; but I ſhould think myſelf altogether unworthy of your Eſteem, were I to indulge the Emotions with which it inſpires me on this Occaſion. And muſt I then tear
you

you from that Heart, and renounce you for
 ever! For ever, did I say! Can I then pro-
 nounce such a Sentence, which perhaps you
 yourself would refuse to utter! Shall those
 Days, which you pass in repeated Vows of
 perpetual Tenderneſs, be loſt to me for ever?
 You reſolve then to live for another, and in-
 tend to extinguish, in her Arms, the Re-
 membrance of my Love and diſconſolate
 Sorrows. You will no more tell me, that
 you adore me, and are determin'd to be as
 inſenſible as you would repreſent yourſelf.
 Who ever compelled you to love me? Did
 not you yourſelf ſelect me from the reſt of
 my Sex, to render me compleatly wretched?
 Ought you not to have been ſenſible, that
 your Heart would one day ceaſe to be my
 Property; and, when my Paſſion has ſo per-
 fectly correſponded with yours, can you for-
 bear to reproach yourſelf, for the mortal
 Anguiſh I ſhall ſuſtain by loſing you for
 ever? To love you to Adoration, and to
 be conſtantly convincing you of that Truth,
 were my only Cares; and who will now
 afford me any Compensatiſon for their Inef-
 ficacy? With what delightful Tranſports
 did I always behold you! but alas! I muſt
 now behold you no more. Ah! moſt perfidi-
 ous Man, had your Paſſion been equal to mine,
 who could ever have robb'd me of your
 Heart? But what do I ſay, miſerable Crea-
 ture

ture that I am ; my Love was too inconsiderable for your Merit, and I must now be only solicitous to preserve your Esteem! Be not apprehensive of displeasing me, by completing your Nuptials : I foresaw the fatal Sacrifice, and submit to it without a Murmur. You love me at present ; but who can convince you that your Passion will never diminish, and that you will not hereafter repent, that you rejected a solid Establishment, in favour of an Union that might soon be dissolved, and which one Moment, either of your Caprice or mine, would possibly destroy for ever ? I loved you for your Merit alone ; and the Satisfaction of beholding you happy, shall requite me for the Loss of all other Enjoyments. You were but little acquainted with the Temper of my Soul, if you imagined it capable of any other Disposition. Consign me to eternal Oblivion ; or let us only be solicitous to cherish a mutual Esteem. You shall be for ever dear to my Remembrance. Had I been capable of Inconstancy, you would have despised me for my Levity ; and, had you abandon'd me, I should have hated you for your Ingratitude. Let us, at least, have no Reproaches to cast on each other. It is reasonable that I should aid you to erase me from your Heart ; submit then to this fatal Necessity, with the Resignation I discover.

Don't

Don't imagine, however, that this Proposal has not cost me many a Pang; or that it will not yet cost me many a Flood of streaming Tears. I never loved you with more Tendernefs than I experience at this Moment; and I even conjure you, by all that Profusion of Tendernefs, not to forget me for ever! This indeed is a Compliance, in which you will find it difficult to indulge me; but ought you not to grant me some Consolation in my present State, and have you no Sentiments of Humanity to afford me? You may reasonably believe I am overwhelmed with a Weight of Woe; and can you resolve to absent yourself from me, at such a Time? Ah! give me not the full Prospect of all my Misery, but permit me, at least, to flatter myself that you lose me with some Regret! Can a Love, like mine, merit so much Indifference? Will a single Line of Softnefs; will one tender Expression cost you so dear? Alas! I am not intreating you to quit the fatal Object that deprives me of all I love. If you refuse me a few Moments of your dear Presence, forbear, at least, to torture me with the Proofs of your Disdain. A little Compassion for me, will be no Injustice to her: It will only increase her Triumph, at the same time that it affords me some Alleviation of my Sorrows. But with what Language could you

comfort me, in your present Situation? You would reproach yourself for all your past Expressions of Tenderneſs; your Eyes would retract them; I ſhould be convinced that no Hopes remained for me, and might poſſibly be guilty of ſome Frailties, for which I ſhould infallibly reproach myſelf. No, my Lord, let me intreat you to ſee me no more. I will preſerve the Remembrance of our Paſſion, to my laſt Breath, and may you endeavour to retain the ſame Diſpoſition. Return me my Letters and my Picture, and keep nothing that can be capable of recalling my Idea to your Imagination; and yet, if it be poſſible, forbear to baniſh me entirely from your Thoughts. Pity me, in ſome tender Moments; for I cannot preſume to require, from you, any Sentiments that are more ardent. Adieu! The Tears that moiſten this Letter, ought to afford you a faithful Proof of the Anguiſh I feel in writing that fatal Word. Let me never ſee you more. I am too well acquainted with the Torture of loving without a mutual Return, to be willing to give that Inquietude to Lady S * * *. She merits all your Attention but too well. We are now ſeparated for ever. Adieu. Ah! do not intirely chaſe me from your Remembrance! Condeſcend ſometimes to recollect how much I lov'd you; but

but forget that I love you still, and shall be for ever incapable of changing.

L E T T E R LII.

I Am convinced of your Disposition, my Lord, by the Ideas you have conceived : They demonstrate your Contempt of my Person, and sufficiently assure me of your Indifference. You may rest persuaded then, that my Passion for you, is entirely extinguished, and that all my Alarms, at the Report of your Marriage, were only fictitious. I affected them with no other View than to conceal my new Passion ; and they furnished me with a Pretext for discarding you in the most effectual manner. You are the only Person who could form, in such a Case, the Imaginations you entertain. You tell me you have no such Thoughts ; why then did you assure me to the contrary in your Letter ? Do you think I am not sufficiently miserable already ? Don't I suffer enough by losing you ; but when your Passion is extinguished, must it be immediately succeeded by Contempt ? Am I then despised ! O Heavens ! and is it from you, Ingrate as you are, that I ought to receive this Treatment ! I, who have sacrificed my Love itself, to your Repose ; I, who was al-

ways sollicitous to convince you of my Tenderness, and have lately given you such a Proof of it, as you might in vain have sought in any other Breast. If the Loss of me really affects you in the manner you represent; is the odious Character you afford me, any Evidence that I continue dear to you still? If you suspect me of Infidelity, you might complain of your Misfortune, without offending me; but in what Particular would you be thought an Object of Compassion? Is it because I have loved you with too much Tenderness? You ought to be sensible, if you can really be sensible of any thing, that I merited Pity, and not an Insult. Did any Mortal ever love like you? I perceive, by your manner of Writing, that I begin to be odious in your Thoughts, and yet you have no Intention to espouse Lady S***. How can you reconcile so much Love and Aversion? With what Coldness do you assure me, that you will be ever constant to me alone? Ah! how different is the warm Language of a real Passion! But I find you are disposed to deceive me. My Apprehensions were once dear to you, and you endeavoured to dissipate them, by all the soft Expedients you could possibly exert, and you dreaded to behold my Tears. You are determined not to espouse Lady S***; but had you re-

jected

jecte
been
testa
alone
own
Hap
But
lose
the
bly
deriv
my
guiss
conf
equa
unde
but
less
ter t
it be
my
emp
me
I an
Can
and
tle,
eith
with
am
I an

jected her for my sake, you would have been impatient to repeat to me, your Protestations that you continued to love me alone. I consented to lose you, for your own Welfare, and sacrificed myself to your Happiness, without a Moment's repining: But I should die with Despair, were you to lose the Remembrance of that Sacrifice, in the Arms of a new Mistress. I may possibly be unjust; but what Satisfaction can I derive, from your Insensibility to the rest of my Sex, if your Passion for me be extinguished? I consider your Coldness and Inconstancy, in the same Light, since they equally deprive me of your Heart. You undoubtedly condemn my Apprehensions; but would any one, in my Condition, be less sensible of their Impressions? Is a Letter then a sufficient Satisfaction; and would it be too much if you came yourself, to calm my Inquietudes? How are your Thoughts employed, while you continue absent from me? You suspect me of Inconstancy, and I am apprehensive that you are perfidious: Can we possibly be serene with these Ideas? and, if you interested yourself, never so little, in my Heart, would you not come, and either convince me of my Infidelity, or share, with me, the Pleasure of being sensible that I am constant? Pity the Condition to which I am reduced, and only condescend to re-

lieve me from my Fears, and clear up your own Suspicions. Let me know, whether I ought to love you still, or resolve to hate you for ever.

L E T T E R L I V.

CAN you be the Object of my Aver-
sion, my dearest Count, when you af-
ford me such convincing Proofs of your
Tendernefs; and don't you rather hate me,
for my Injustice to you, at a time when you
were removing every Obstacle that might
have prevented you from being entirely
mine? I have all imaginable Conviction of
your Fidelity; and can you image to your-
self then, the Ecstasy of my Joys? I can
no longer be doubtful that you love me;
but are you sensible of all the Impressions
this Certainty ought to produce in my Heart?
Could I have any Cause to complain, if you
had abandon'd me in reality? You would
only have acted in obedience to my De-
sires; but you was sensible how much it
cost me to urge them. You was touched
at the melancholy State to which my Ap-
prehensions of losing you, had reduced me;
and I hope you will endeavour not to re-
pent of your Compassion. Do you believe
my Heart can make you any Compensa-
tion

tion for what you have acted on my account? I now am certain that you love me, and you may depend on the softest Returns my Passion can possibly offer you. Why had you not the same Confidence in me, as I repose in you? Would not the Days we employed in giving new Torments to each other, have been better devoted to the mutual Proofs of our Ardours; and when we are neither troubled with the Jealous or Impertinent, should we occasion more Calamities to ourselves, than they could ever create us? Have we any need of Reconciliations, to secure us from lifeless Languors? Frequent Ruptures naturally disgust the Heart, and never contribute the least Ardours to Love. Would not the voluntary Absence, to which we condemn ourselves, prove an insupportable Punishment, were it to be inflicted by any other Person? and are we not very irrational, to subject ourselves to so many Inquietudes; or have we any superfluous Moments to lose? Let me intreat you not to love me with these immoderate Emotions you sometimes disclose; for they are always succeeded by too much Indifference. I am not ambitious of your Transports, and would only be solicitous to possess your Heart. There are many tender Inclinations in the Soul, to which
we

we may resign ourselves without any Violation of our Virtue. I am desirous of that Love, which they say was so familiar to *Plato*, and of which we have had so little Experience : A Love refined from all Impressions of Sense, and yet not easily wrought into a Habit, since we find it so difficult to be comprehended. Adieu ! Let us, without discomposing ourselves with these Particulars, continue to love as we began. This will be sufficient for us, and I am inclined to think we shall be lost in our Researches after any other.

Gracious Heaven, how inconsiderate am I grown ! I have entertain'd you with Trifles for these two Hours, and forgot to acquaint you that Lady *** desires a Visit from you at Noon. She intends to pass the Remainder of the Day at *** ; and, as I have a thousand things to tell you, I am persuaded that I shall attend her. Ah me ! — Have you not the Curiosity to ask me why I sigh ?

LET-

L E T T E R L V.

P O O R Lady G*** has lost her Lover, after four Years Constancy; and, notwithstanding all my Dissuasions, the Charms of little I*** have compleated the Passion which his Disgust for his other Mistress had sketch'd out. Yes Madam, said this Gentleman to me a few Days ago, the Affair is finished, and the Assiduities I paid her, for a considerable time past, only flow'd from Gratitude; and, if I except a trifling Idea that still torments me, we have lived for these two Years past like good Friends, and nothing more. Her Sensibility makes me apprehensive that she will die with mere Grief, when she discovers my Inconstancy. I have not omitted any thing that might incline her to desire a Rupture, which daily became more necessary to us both. I have counterfeited a Passion for other Women, and she impatiently expected my Return to her. I have been to visit her, a hundred times, with an Intention to tell her that my Passion was extinguished, and it should seem as if she selected those Moments, to confound me with the strongest Proofs of her Tendernefs; so that I was obliged to quit her, without adjusting the Affair as I could have wished. Those Conversations, that
were

were once animated, are now languid, and unproductive of any pleasing Effect ; and all the Moments that Love, and her Presence, formerly render'd so charming, are entirely disagreeable to my Remembrance. In vain do I endeavour to reason myself into Constancy, since my very Want of those Lectures, makes me sensible of their Inefficacy. I have sometimes the Curiosity to trace the Cause of my Disgust. I see an amiable Woman, graced with all the Charms of Youth and Wit, but her Attractions no longer affect me. My Reason continues to assure me she is lovely, but my Heart no longer confirms me in that Persuasion, and every other Circumstance pleads ineffectually in her favour. Ought she not to be sensible, by my Indifference, that I no longer love her ; and, can a Lady be deceived by studied Transports, after she has experienced all the Ardours and Enthusiasms of a Lover. In spite of all my Efforts, we must come to a Rupture ; and, in my Opinion, it gives a Man more Torment to feign a Passion for a Woman he never can love, than he can receive by practising that Dissimulation, with a Woman he never did love.

The Gentleman concluded this fine Discourse, with intreating *St. Far****, who professes a Friendship for Lady G***, to insinuate

insinuate some Suspicions into her Mind, and
 to assure her that she was no longer belov'd ;
 and he promised not to contradict any one
 Particular. But your Lordship does not
 consider, replied *St. Far****, that her De-
 spair will prove fatal to her. Ah ! rejoin'd
*P**** ; were I not persuaded of that Ef-
 fect, I would not desire you to inform her
 of my Inconstancy. Consent, in mere
 pity, to save me : She is desirous I should
 espouse her ; besides, a Discovery, of this
 nature, is more supportable when imparted
 by another, than it can be, when it pro-
 ceeds from a Lover, who has been accus-
 tomed to speak a different Language. *St.*
*Far**** positively refused to charge him-
 self with this Commission. 'Tis well, re-
 plied the other, I shall solicit you no more ;
 but remember that you compel me to plunge
 a Dagger into her Bosom. At this, he ab-
 ruptly started away, and we continued in
 the *Thuilleries*, reflecting on this unusual
 Constancy of Lady *G****, when we saw
 him advancing to us, with a wild and dis-
 order'd Aspect. 'Tis done, said he, and I
 am now content, if one can possibly be so,
 by driving a Lady one tenderly loves, to
 Despair. When he left us, he immediately
 went to her House, where she expected him
 with the utmost Impatience, and the Day
 was fix'd for compleating the mutual Proofs
 of

of their Tenderneſs. The Conjunſture was preſſing; he was confounded at the Proſpect of the Danger; he ſtopp'd; he hesitated. She began to importune him; he was offended, and ſhe was ſeized with Deſpair; while he very frankly acquainted her with the Cauſe of her Calamity. She then ſunk down in a Swoon; P*** tender'd his Aſſiſtance: She at laſt revived; threw herſelf, in a Flood of Tears, at his Feet, and utter'd the moſt affecting Language that was ever expreſs'd. P*** likewise melted into Tears, and intreated her to arm herſelf with Reſolution; but the Softneſs of her Paſſion was ſucceeded by Rage: She ſnatch'd his Sword, with an Intention to plunge it into her Boſom: He wreſted it from her Hands, and diſengaged himſelf from her, as well as he could; and, that ſhe might have ſufficient reaſon to be convinced he was in earneſt, he writ her his laſt Farewel, in the *Swiſſe's* Lodge. This Adventure he related to me, with an Air of Triumph, and gave me repeated Aſſurances, that ſhe would infallibly die with Deſpair.

The unfortunate Lady, upon his Departure, took to her Bed, and paſs'd the Remainder of that Day, and the enſuing Night, in Sighs and Faintings. She roſe in the ſame Extremity of Sorrow; and, as the Day-light was grown deteſtable to her Eyes, ſhe drew the

the Curtains of her Chamber, and with a languishing Recline under her Canopy, lamented the Loss of her Lover ; after which her Health became so impaired, that there was reason to be apprehensive her last Moments were approaching ; and in all probability, she would soon have expired, if the young Duke of * * *, who enter'd her Apartment, the Moment she was receiving the Assistance of those about her, had not reconciled her to Consolation, within half an Hour after her Attendants imagined she was breathing her last. The Duke, who thought this Adventure very entertaining, immediately related the Particulars to his Friends ; and one of these, who was intimate with P * * *, inform'd him of every Circumstance. P * * *, amidst his Despair that she was still living, and had been so soon prevailed upon to receive that Consolation of which he thought her incapable, found his Passion rekindled, by the very Circumstances that ought to have extinguished it for ever. He has been extremely solicitous to reinstate himself in the Favour of Lady G * * * ; but you know the Disposition of a Person who has condescended to be soothed in her Affliction ; she entirely despised him ; and he has had all the Difficulty in the World, to forget her, as well as little I * * *, whom he had loved to desperation till then.

Y

Adieu,

Adieu, my Lord, and before you are disposed to treat me with any Instances of Perfidy, recollect the Adventure of your Friend, and the Manner by which Lady G*** attained her Consolation.

B I L L E T.

*I have, this Moment, received a Visit from that egregious Prude Lady ***, attended by a couple of Wits, who will distract me with their Ingenuity, if I don't find some Expedient for my Relief. She has given me an Invitation to sup with her, and I am undone if you neglect to be there. Bring St. Far*** with you, I conjure you; he is fond of Disputation, and will afford these Men of Genius some Employment. I shall then enjoy your Conversation, or at least shall be so happy as to see you. Perhaps you may not conceive to what degree these Gentlemen are capable of being insipid. They talk eternally, and I have not Capacity enough to understand a Word they utter. You may judge then, what Satisfaction I am like to enjoy. Be so generous therefore, to deliver me, by your Presence, from the Persecution I must otherwise sustain; and be sure to come, though you should imagine I only form this Pretext to see you. The Service you will render me on this Occasion, shall be received with suitable Acknowledgments:*

ments: The Chagrin you may suffer, shall be requited, by my permitting you to see me fifteen Days successively, and with all the Privacy you please. Will you really come?

L E T T E R LVI.

CAN any thing in nature be so unaccountable as your Jealousy? and, can you think so meanly of my Conduct, as to believe me capable of loving the Man who gives you so much Inquietude? If you must needs torment yourself with Rivals, let them, at least, be such as may not dishonour me by their Unworthiness. But why should you create yourself imaginary Competitors, when every Part of my Conduct is such an evident Proof, that I am devoted to you alone! I would not have you suppose that I intend to clear myself from the Imputation of that Inconstancy with which you charge me: I should injure you too much, were I to persuade myself that your Jealousy is real. I am well acquainted with your capricious Turn of Mind, and you give me a singular Instance of it, by your present Suspicions. Your Delicacy is not so refined, as to be shock'd at my Conversation with a Man, from whom I never received a Visit, nor ever shall, whatever Imaginations you

Y. 2 may?

may please to entertain; and I am sensible you can never sustain any real Uneasiness, from a Person who is not form'd in such a manner as ought to give you any Apprehensions. This modest Opinion of your own Merit, would surprize me, were I unacquainted with the Cause. The Truth is, you allow me no Share in your Esteem, but engross it all to yourself; and amidst the Severities you launch against my Sex, you have not the Goodness to make any particular Exception in my favour. You are sensible of my tender Affection for you, but never consider it as any Obligation. You believe I have an absolute Propensity to love, and if you sometimes flatter yourself, that your Merit created a Sensibility in my Soul, you more frequently impute that Impression to an Effect of Caprice, that might have disposed me to have been as favourable to another, as I have prov'd to you. You may remember, however, that the Heart you so much despise at present, was not so easy to be gained. You was obliged to employ all your Artifice to conquer it, and would never have succeeded, if you had not disguised your natural Disposition, when you began to attack it; or if I had suffer'd the Dictates of my Reason to persuade me that you resembled those Men, for whom I had conceived so much Horror. You may possibly

sibly
Passi
rive
you.
your
of y
I no
Pan
your
sion
gen
guil
you
had
mu
fun
Yo
ard
Inc
exp
Inc
sta
of
Co
wa
int
yo
th
ch
bl
fo

sibly alledge to me the Continuance of your Passion, and I am willing you should derive from it, all the Honour it can afford you. But, alas! how many Instances of your Perfidy to me; and what a Variety of your Attachments to other Objects, have I not been obliged to pardon! How many Pangs and Tears has it cost me to reclaim your Heart; and how soon would your Passion have expired, if my obsequious Indulgence had not prevented you from extinguishing its Flame! How wretched would you have render'd me, by your Infidelity, had I not opposed your Coldness with so much Constancy, that you could not presume to tell me I had lost you for-ever! Your Passion would have been much more ardent, had I affected to treat you with an Indifference, equal to the Love you have experienced. Had Variety been my seeming Inclination, I could have created you a constant Perplexity, by leaving you uncertain of the true State of my Heart: The Arts of Coquetry and Dissimulation, would have waked your Passion from those Languors into which you have suffer'd it to sink; and you would have dreaded my Inconstancy, the moment you thought me capable of changing. But I can assure you, I should blush to be indebted to such degrading Arts, for the Possession of your Heart. I am sen-

sible that I am fated to lose you; but, instead of making me the Victim of your Levities, be so generous as to confirm to me, at once, the Reality of that Loss. As miserable as it may render me, it can never be more tormenting than the cruel Uncertainty in which I now live. I only request you to declare, you no longer love me; and, can you think a little Sincerity too valuable a Return, for all the Tenderness you have experienced from me?

LETTER LVII.

WHEN your Passion, for me, was in its utmost Warmth, I foresaw that you would, one day, prove inconstant. I have now experienced the Truth of that Prefage; and though it afflicts me too severely, yet it gives me no Surprise. Could I have any reason to flatter myself, that you would always continue to love me, and if I was assured of my own Constancy, by the Disposition of my Heart, what Security could that afford me for yours? You are, at last, determin'd to forsake me, and perhaps for another Object; or you may possibly be so satiated with Love, as to condemn yourself to an eternal Indifference. But I shall not pretend to enter into the Reasons by
which

which you have suffer'd yourself to be conducted. A Lover would be too unfortunate, were it necessary for him to be always attached to the Object he once pretended to adore; and, for the sake of a Conquest he no longer esteems, should decline all Opportunities of making those that are new. I shall not trouble you with any Complaints, since it is not your Fault, if I continue to love you; and you have practis'd every Expedient, to extinguish a Passion you no longer had an Inclination to cherish. You never promis'd me an unchanging Love; but if you had really made me any Protestations of that nature, yet I should not be astonished to find you perjur'd. You once thought me amiable, but are convinced that I cease to appear so now; and since the few Charms of my Person were the only Motives to your Passion, it may justly be extinguished with those. My only Request at present is, that you would see me no more; and I am the more inclin'd to urge it, because I am sensible it will cost you nothing to grant it. I am conscious that I love you still; let me then habituate myself, by your Absence, to consider you with Indifference. The Sight of you would plunge me into new Despair. You could only repeat to me the Language of your Letter, and it would be ungenerous in you, to behold the Flow of those Tears,

which

which you have no Inclination to check. But is it possible then, that you should resolve to abandon me for ever! And have I no more Interest in that Heart, that perjur'd Heart, that pretended to derive all its Felicity from our Union! Ah! how tormenting is the Loss of that Enjoyment, which was once the Source of our dearest Delights! Notwithstanding all I have said of your Inconstancy, alas! I was never in a Disposition to preface it! I had such an implicit Confidence in your Protestations, and flatter'd myself that my excessive Passion had so effectually secured me from the Loss of your Heart, that I never imagined you capable of any perfidious Conduct. I was conscious that nothing could ever rend you from my Soul, and have sometimes deluded myself into a Belief, that I should be the only Object of your real Passion. I was delighted to think, that my Death alone could restore you to yourself; and that even in my last Moments, I should enjoy the Felicity of beholding myself regretted, and beloved by you. Why do you envy me the only Consolation that was left me! Come then, inhuman as you are, and be sedulous to overwhelm me with your Indifference. Persuade yourself, that you would treat me with too much Barbarity, should you permit me to live any longer! I am now to lose you
eter-

etern
have
favor
min'
fions
tion
Imp
our
and
man
self
you
be c
whic
ness,
Obj
I ha
and

I
Sigh
in n
ting
whi
fenc
long
ness

eternally ; for such is the Resolution you have taken ! You are not prepossessed in favour of another, and yet you are determin'd to forsake me. Were the Expressions of your Letter, written with Deliberation ; and did you seriously consider their Importance ? Rest persuaded then, that our Intercourse expires from this Moment ; and that since you have deserted me in this manner, should you hereafter throw yourself at my Feet, with more Tenderness than you ever yet discovered, and should I even be conscious of those Sentiments in my Soul, which have so long constituted our Happiness, I would resolve to consider you as the Object of all my Aversion for ever. Adieu ; I have acquainted you with my Resolution, and have nothing more to say to you.

L E T T E R LVIII.

I Desired you, in my last Letter, to see me no more ; for I am sensible that the Sight of you would revive those Sentiments in my Soul, which it is my Interest to extinguish. But such is the cruel State to which you have reduced me, that your Absence is the greatest of my Calamities. I no longer ask you for any Returns of Tenderness ; but, at the same time, I am certain
that

that I have not merited your Reluctance to see me. Be not apprehensive that I intend to make you any Reproaches ; for I am persuaded they would all be unavailing, and am more offended with myself, than with you. Had my Eyes not been so fatally closed, and had my Passion been so discreet, as to have permitted me to reflect on your Conduct, and to discover, in every Part of it, your Insensibility of my Condescensions in your favour, you should never have found it necessary to acquaint me with your Inconstancy. But alas ! my Judgment was so obscured, at that time, that I believed you to be as perfect as I could wish. However, I shall not enter into any Detail that may displease you ; and I have no Intention to reproach you, tho' you have been so cruel as to forsake me. But, in what Particular have I merited your Contempt ? You are sensible that I am indisposed, and yet you absent yourself from me. What Offence have I committed, that obliges you to treat me with so much Barbarity ? You are still apprehensive of my Passion ; Ah ! cease to entertain any Fears of that nature ! As violent as it yet continues, your Insensibility, and my Loftiness of Soul, will preserve me from all its former Effects. You no longer shall see my Eyes overflowed with degrading Tears ; and shall no more behold me
descend-

descend-
tho'
nounc
is the
const
to yo
Conte
Conc
have
been
Ah!
with
out t
vent,
I sho
if, w
instar
have
Cold
sion,
lence
I lo
only
peri
cease
whic
to se
not
me
for-
affo

descending to despicable Intreaties. But,
 tho' we cease to be Lovers, have we re-
 nounced the Pleasures of Friendship? This
 is the utmost I can possibly ask; but In-
 constancy would not be sufficiently agreeable
 to you, were you not to aggravate it with
 Contempt. In what Circumstance of my
 Conduct does my Guilt consist? You alone
 have occasioned all my Crimes: Had it not
 been for you, I might still have enjoy'd—
 Ah! to what purpose do I torment myself
 with such cruel Reflections! They only point
 out the Misconduct they were unable to pre-
 vent, and officiously redouble my Despair.
 I should be less afflicted at your Indifference,
 if, while I cease to be beloved, I could re-
 instate that Repose in my Soul, which you
 have banish'd for ever. But, alas! your
 Coldness, instead of extinguishing my Pas-
 sion, seems to rekindle it with greater Vio-
 lence! To what Unhappiness am I fated!
 I love you, even to Madness, when you
 only dissemble a Tenderness you never ex-
 perience; and I die with Despair, when you
 cease to delude me. Pity the Condition to
 which I am reduced. I am only solicitous
 to see you, and I will oblige you so far, as
 not to be alone when you visit me. Let
 me accustom myself, insensibly, to lose you
 for-ever. Tell me each Particular that can
 afford me the Confirmation of my Misfor-
 tune;

tune ; it would be an Excess of Cruelty, to conceal any Circumstance from me. Consider likewise, that if you abruptly discontinue your Visits, you may create some Suspensions in my Husband, and you surely are too polite, to give him any Cause to entertain them. Adieu, my Lord ; I am not desirous that your Complaisance, for me, should be of a long Continuance, and I shall be able, by a sudden Absence, to free you from the Embarrassment of repeating it much longer.

L E T T E R LIX.

CEASE, for Heaven's sake, to write to me any more, and save me from the Mortification of despising a Person I once thought worthy of my Esteem. You have come to a Rupture with me, and I am not disposed to complain of your Proceeding. I entertained such a favourable Opinion of you, as inclined me to believe you would not treat me with Injustice, nor ever abandon me, without sufficient Reasons. I have even esteemed you for the Sincerity with which you acquainted me with your Change ; and you now presume to intreat my Pardon ! You can assure me, that your Estrangement was the Effect of your Caprice, and

are

are capable of plunging a Dagger into my Bosom; with all the Calmness imaginable. Do I, then, deserve this Treatment, who lived for you alone; and can you entertain so contemptible an Opinion of me, as to imagine I can ever restore you my Heart for the future! Barbarous Man! who from no Inducement, but the Satisfaction of overwhelming me with Despair, have treated me as if I had been the most criminal of my Sex. Had you determined to devote your Passion to another Object, and only quitted me to resign yourself entirely to her, I could have excused your Inconstancy, and should even have had the Generosity to believe I had given you some Cause for the Change I have experienced in you. I would have consider'd your new Passion, as altogether involuntary on your part, and might possibly have derived some Consolation from that Thought: But that you should thus pretend to forsake me, without the least Regard to Decorum, and with no other View than to satisfy your Curiosity whether the Loss of you will affect me, gives me a Pang I am incapable of sustaining. As short a space of Time as such a Feint may continue, it will always be too long, and nothing but such Inhumanity itself could have Recourse to an Artifice. I, however, could have pardon'd you that Dissimulation, and should have loved

Z

you

you so ardently, as to have flatter'd myself that your Proceeding had resulted from an Excess of Delicacy ; and as peculiar as the Proofs may be, by which a Lover would assure himself of his Interest in our Heart, they are always charming, when they are so many Demonstrations of his Passion. Had my Idea of you been of this nature, one Day would have sufficed for your Satisfaction, and my Torment. You would not have refused me the smallest Instances of Complaisance, nor have absented yourself from me, for fifteen Days ; and when you had afterwards seen me, you would not have added the most inhuman Insults to the Injury you had already offer'd me. And can you still presume to write to me ! Can you recall my Idea to your Soul, without expiring with Confusion ! You tell me that you love me ; Ah ! how happy should I be, were that Acknowledgment sincere !

May that Passion, then, be your eternal Torment ; and may I, one day, give you as many Proofs of my Aversion and Contempt, as you have received of my Tenderness, and of which the most detestable of your Sex would have been more worthy than yourself.

L E T-

L E T T E R L X.

IT would really be very singular, should I still continue to love you ; and I agree with you, that my Conduct, in that Particular, would be extremely pleasant. But I can assure you, my poor Count, that my Mirth is much abated, and I had reason to acquaint you, that you would not find the Conclusion of the Comedy so agreeable as you might imagine. Were you truly sensible what a ridiculous Part you act at present, you would not have any Power to personate it much longer. You are extremely languid and disengaged, I confess ; Lady *** had rejected your Assiduities, and I am diverted at your Surprize. What a number of Mortifications must you needs sustain ! Comfort yourself, however, for most Men have experienced the same Fate : But how could it possibly happen to you ; and that, as amiable as you are, you should be repulsed from two different Quarters ? But you have one Resource, after all ; for it seems you once have loved me, and have been so successful as to deceive me ; have Recourse then to your fruitful Imagination for some new Method of deluding me. I am perfectly acquainted with your disconsolate Air, on those Occasions ; . but neither that, nor the affected Sighs you

Z 2

breathe

breathe from the bottom of your Heart; the little Flows of Language you express with so much Delicacy; the Letters you pen with so much Elegance; the weeping Languor of your Eyes; your dejected Mien, nor all the Arts you have already assumed, will ever touch me for the future; and I believe these are the only Dexterities you can practise, to regain me. Even your Wit is all ineffectual, since it will be unobserved by me: You therefore judge very properly, that all these polite Attractions will be unavailing. What still contributes to your Misfortune is, that you pass for a Deceiver, and that few Women of tolerable Understanding ever credit your Protestations: And, as you are not fond of Conquests that are too easy, I doubt your Sighs will not be so soon rewarded as you may wish. You see how unhappy you are! Your Passion for me began to disgust you; I was no longer capable of inspiring you with Tenderness; and you forgot that you ever thought me amiable. You treated me in a perfidious manner, and endeavoured to render yourself happy with other Objects; but when you had the Mortification to be disappointed, you grew desirous of returning to me. I received you with some Severity, and you are now more amorous than ever. What a charming Heart is yours, and
how

how delightful must it be, to have the Disposal of all its Emotions! You, however, have ranged the Circumstances of this Adventure, with great Judgment: According to your Plan I must needs continue to love you; and you think that Passion would be natural to me, were it not a little disconcerted by Caprice: But you thought yourself confident that my Sentiments, in your favour, could not long be discontinued, and I cannot blame you, if you are surprized to find me so different from what you expected. You are not able to comprehend this Incident, tho' it proves more important than any other. But it is time for me to finish this little Pleasantry, and answer your Letter. I owe you some good Advice, as well as a free Confession of the Sentiments I entertain on your account. I must therefore acquaint you, that my Passion is entirely extinguished: I could have told you the same, in the Height of my Resentment, but not with so much Sincerity as at present. When our Minds are agitated to an extreme Degree, we may easily impose upon ourselves; but as soon as the first Emotion is over, we consider Things with Calmness, and are not so liable to be deceived. You may therefore receive it, from me, as an infallible Truth, that I neither love you at this time, nor ever shall for the future. Your Repentance may pos-

sibly be sincere, but it will never affect me. We seldom grant our Pardon, but when it affords us some Pleasure to offer it, and when the Injuries we have sustain'd have not been so considerable as to extinguish our Affection. You are sensible of the Injustice I have suffer'd from you, and I shall not condescend to repeat the Particulars. Let your Heart be its own Judge; may it overwhelm you with all the Reproaches you merit, and place your Conduct before you, in such an odious Light, as may prevent you from afflicting any other with the Injuries you have offer'd me. I once lov'd you to Adoration, and my Passion was incapable of a Moment's Insincerity; but you have, at last, caus'd it to expire. You assure me, at present, that I am the only Object of your Tenderness; but you will be too unhappy, if you entertain any Sentiments, with which my Heart is unable to correspond. But were even this possible, you ought to be cautious of indulging any flattering Thoughts. Render Justice to yourself, and renounce all Hope: Perhaps you may not have Discretion enough to discontinue your Visits to me, and therefore I shall make it my part to prevent them. Absence is our only Cure on such Occasions, and when we suffer by unfortunate Passions, the Sight of the Object that created them, gives us the severest Torments.

Torments. However, if your Departure is to be so sudden as you inform me, I grant you my Permission to visit me, in order to take your final Leave. I neither am, nor ever intend to be your Enemy; and it is equally certain, that I shall never be your Lover. Let not my Goodness betray you into any false Expectations; were it less than it really is, you might entertain what Hopes you pleas'd; but you ought to regard my Consent to see you, as an infallible Proof of my Indifference.

B I L L E T.

If it must be so, my Lord, I permit you to be at the Opera, and am infinitely obliged to you for your Industry, to be inform'd what Box I shall appear in; and since you so much desire it, I shall take care to have you accommodated with a Place: But, as tender as the Musick may be, all Opera Nights are not alike; and whatever soft things you may tell me, with relation to Armida and Rinaldo, I shall remember too well that I have been the one, ever to allow you to be the other.

L E T.

L E T T E R L X I.

I Always thought till now, that Expostulations of Jealousy were only the Privilege of one beloved, and can never be enough surpriz'd at the Discourse you entertain'd me with yesterday. Every Circumstance from you offends me, when I observe that Love, or rather Vanity (for you certainly have more of this than of the other) is intermixed with all your Conduct. Have you any Reason to believe, that the Person who is more indifferent to me than any other of his Sex, should be more successful in my Heart, than you, whom I have loved with so much Tenderneſs? What have you to demand of me, at present, and on what do you raise your Pretensions? If you had discovered any Charms in my Tenderneſs, you would have been more ſollicitous to preſerve it, and would never have compelled me to change it into Indifference. I am not surpriz'd that you ſhould ceaſe to love me, ſince I no longer can affect you with any pleaſing Impreſſions; and it was natural for you to diſcontinue an Intercourſe, which could afford you no more Satisfaction. Whatever may be ſaid of Conſtancy, it always expires with Love, and ſeldom ſubſiſts longer than the
Gratifi-

Gratification of those Desires it created. I was sensible, when I resign'd myself to your Ardours, that they would soon diminish, and I should be condemn'd to lose you; but as I suffer'd myself to be betray'd by those Sentiments that extinguished my Reason, I had no Power to guard against the Danger, tho' I so well knew myself obnoxious to it. I have observ'd you, for some time, more tender than you even appeared before I gave you the utmost Proofs of my Weakness; and whatever they may have cost me, they can never create me any Dissatisfaction, while they contribute to your Happiness. But alas! this delightful Time will soon come to a Period! your Desires will grow languid, and you will be less attentive to please me: My Passion will cease to present you with its former Charms, and you will find it difficult to afford it any suitable Returns. Some Considerations may, perhaps, prevent you from assuming an ungenerous Air of Coldness; but my Presence will become distasteful to you; you will receive, with Reluctance, the repeated Proofs of my Frailty, and every Circumstance, on my part, will give you some Disquietude. What would have been your Condition, if you could have had no Recourse to Inconstancy for your Relief? But it ill becomes me to complain of your Conduct;

duct; you are entirely Master of yourself, and can extinguish your Passion when you please. You imagine you continue to love me, and are even affected with Jealousy: But is it possible you should forget the Value you entertained for your Liberty; and do you no more remember that you sacrificed me to the Pleasure of enjoying it? You intreat me to afford you some obliging Instances of my Regard for you; and are not my Letters such Favours as may induce you to hope for more? I observe, with Regret, that they inspire you with Ideas, which, for the sake of your Repose, you ought to have extinguished long ago; and, if you would think justly, you ought to be sensible, that a Disinclination to wish any thing to your Disadvantage, may as naturally proceed from Indifference, as it can from Generosity. Hatred may be succeeded by contrary Impressions; and tho' I will not pretend to answer for myself in every particular, yet I can venture to declare, you are not the Object of my Aversion. With respect to your Apprehensions, you have Reason to imagine that I am not disposed to relieve you from them; and that, if I really continued to love you, I should not consider your Jealousy as any Obligation, since I am persuaded it rather proceeds from the degrading Opinion you entertain of me,

than

than f
rit.
sion,
and t
my R
Lord
you c
pose
be ab
You
sures

2
your
Hus
you.
mer
bad
it p
sider
and
acce
As
sent
triv
rou
fer
bar
ref

than from any Diffidence of your own Merit. But should I really indulge a new Passion, I should only act by your Direction, and this, at least, would be an Evidence of my Regard for your Counsels. Adieu, my Lord ; my Affairs will not permit me to see you to-day ; my own Inclinations will oppose your Visit to-morrow, and I shall not be able to answer for the rest of the Week : You may, therefore, adjust either your Pleasures or Affairs accordingly.

B I L L E T.

*You may well congratulate yourself for your Dexterity, in causing the Marquis my Husband to reproach me for my Incivility to you. You remember, I suppose, that in a former Circumstance, of the like nature, you had Recourse to the same Thought, and that it proved very successful : But you must consider that I sincerely lov'd you, at that time, and was willing to improve any Pretext for accomplishing a Reconciliation between us. As our Affairs are otherwise situated at present, you ought to have studied some new Contrivance ; but when one is not extremely amorous, one's Invention happens not to be very fertile. Such extraordinary Schemes will exhaust your Imagination, and I advise you to reserve them for Lady N***. She assures me,*

me, you are very desirous to render yourself agreeable to her ; but I fear it will be difficult for you to make her retract the Opinion she entertains to your Disadvantage : But I promise you to employ my best Endeavours to inspire her with more favourable Sentiments : For, as I am but too happy in beholding you devoted to another, I shall try all manner of Expedients to soften her Rigours. You will soon receive my Answer, by the Marquis ; but I must intreat you not to employ him, in Messages of this nature. I reproach myself for ever consenting to such a Proceeding, and should be inexcusable, were I to suffer it any longer.

L E T T E R L X H.

THE Prince of *** certainly loves me ; but it is not equally true that I have any Aversion for him. The Manner in which you have seen us together, will not permit me to dissemble ; and besides, it is so natural to be in love, that I cannot think any Denial of it necessary on this Occasion. Yes, my Lord, I really love him, and am surprized that you, who were always so jealous, can possibly doubt it. Do you forget then, that my Heart is so extremely tender, that were it even favourable to thirty Lovers,

Lovers, I should have a Reserve of Sensibility for those who might still present me with their Addresses. One Sigh alone is sufficient with me. I can assure you, however, the Prince has not offer'd me any as yet; and I have taken the utmost Care not to render them necessary. He is too illustrious a Conquest, not to merit all imaginable Attention; and I am not able to conceive, why you should fancy that he would find me inflexible. 'Tis true, his Wit is not altogether miraculous; but, whenever he pleases, he can be complimented with that Quality, by so many Persons who really enjoy it, that his own Want of it will be less visible. He must be very destitute indeed, if he has not Genius enough to amuse a Woman; and, whatever you may please to think, he tells me the same fine things, you have utter'd yourself. He makes me solemn Protestations that he adores me, and delivers himself in such a moving Tone, as extremely becomes him; while his Eyes, more eloquent than his Words, are consequently more persuasive. His soft and sedulous Air convinces me, that his Sentiments correspond with his Expressions; though he never assures me of the Violence of his Passion, by such inconsiderate Sighs as you affected yesterday, and which drew upon you the Attention of a whole Assembly. His

A a

Modesty

Modesty is much superior to yours, and I discover, in his Timidity, more Passion than I ever observ'd in your Self-sufficiency. He loves me without indulging the least Hope, and I should be pleas'd with the Appearance of so disinterested a Conduct, were it less a Reality. What other Declaration do you expect from me now? Perhaps he may impose on my Credulity; but then he is careful never to displease me: And, as I have made half a Conquest in fifteen Days, I esteem it a considerable Progress, for one so disgusted with Love as myself. However, I am apt to think I shall not amuse myself much longer, with these extraordinary Qualities. The most amiable Lover may easily cease to be such, and the Assurance that he has already pleased, soon renders him incapable of that Power for the future. I am so convinc'd of what I say, that I am resolv'd to dismiss my sighing Admirers, before the weak Moment appears. We never act so disagreeable a Part, as when we value ourselves for our Fidelity to your Sex. Constancy is no more than a Chimera; it no longer subsists in Nature, and is the most absurd Effect that can result from the whole Course of our Reflections. Shall a vain Principle of Honour, which even eludes our Conception, when we submit to its Dictates, prevent us from changing, when we
are

are dissatisfied with our Choice ! Why should we be subservient to the Caprice of a Lover, who would make his own Inclinations the Rule of our Conduct ; and oblige us to experience that Disgust which is created in him by a long Passion ! For what reason should we bear the Austerity of a Master, from the Person we imagined would be our Slave ? or why should we think it meritorious, to love one who ceases to inspire us with Tenderness ! Can any thing be more ridiculous than such a Proceeding, and am I not very happy, since you have freed me from so painful a Situation ? But though you have favour'd me with so many Obligations, I must intreat you not to visit me so often. You would, for-ever, entertain me with your Conversation ; but, I think, I have already assured you I have no Answer to return you. You are likewise sensible, that when I permitted you to see me, I imagin'd your sudden Departure would place us at a sufficient Distance from each other : But you still continue in Town, and I am not disposed to be eternally complaisant to your Desires. Adieu, my Lord ; the Goodness I have discover'd, by unfolding my Heart to you, without Reserve, is not so advantageous to you as you might possibly wish ; but it was necessary to restore me to my Repose. You would interrupt it, by engaging me to renew my Pas-

sion; and I believe the most effectual Method to dissuade you from that Attempt, will be to convince you that my Sentiments can no longer correspond with yours.

B I L L E T.

It seems you are indisposed; and am I the Cause? thou artful, perfidious Man! I suppose then, I must likewise be accountable for all the Disorders you may hereafter sustain. In what a Variety of Shapes do you assault my Weakness! At our last Interview, you had Recourse to Tears; and what have you not attempted to-day! Does your Recovery depend on me? Believe me, you rate your Health at too great a Price. You are desirous to find my Heart as favourable to you as ever; but I am sensible, the Pardon I am inclin'd to grant you, would only afford you an Opportunity of insulting me a-new. The happy Time you still desire, is already pass'd; you have almost erased it from your Remembrance; and why should I sigh, when I recall it to my Thoughts! All the World assures me that you still continue to love me; but they certainly misinform me, since I find it so difficult to believe them. Regain your Health, however, that I may have the Confirmation of what they say, from yourself; for I desire nothing more than a Conviction
of

of that nature. I am sensible, that you already inspire me with abundance of Compassion; the rest I shall reserve till I see you.

L E T T E R L X I I I .

MY Pardon has been only too extensive, cruel as you are! You yesterday beheld my Tears, and Weakness; what can you desire more? I am not displeas'd at your Fears, but am unwilling to indulge you in too much Security. Were you entirely convinced of my Passion, it would be less pleasing to you than your present Uncertainty, which proves to me, that, as yet, you are unacquainted with all the Wrongs you have offer'd me; for your Suspicions that you are not beloved, are so many Confessions that you hardly merit that Favour. But do you intend to continue long in that doubtful State? Will your Heart be really devoted to me again; and are you sensible of the Gratitude and Tenderneſs you owe me? I have seen you affected with Transports that seem'd sincere: But ah! how apprehensive am I, that Vanity was their Source! You cast your Eyes on a Rival, and never thought me worthy to be loved, till you lost all Hopes of regaining my Heart. It rais'd your Indignation to see yourself on the Point

of losing an Enjoyment you so long possessed, and you was more solicitous to make the Prince * * * sensible of the Power of your Charms, than to afford me any Evidence of your Passion, when you endeavour'd to deprive him of the Heart he wish'd to inspire with Impressions in his favour. You imagin'd I was not displeas'd with his Addresses, and you consider'd the Loss of my Heart, as a Circumstance that might tend to your Dishonour. I needed not the Assistance of your Idea, to guard me against any Tenderness for him. When I was even oppress'd with my utmost Sorrows, you were as dear to me as ever. My Reason would indeed declare against so extravagant a Passion, and endeavour'd to disguise the Emotions that rose in my Breast. I imagin'd I could prevail on myself to hate you, but soon found that Sentiment too painful to be true. I then wish'd to consider you with Indifference; but alas! that very Desire convinced me of my Incapacity to accomplish it. I was tortur'd by these Agitations of my Soul, and they only abated when I beheld you. Love then employ'd all my Thoughts, and your Sensibility was the only Subject of my warmest Desires. Happy should I have been amidst the Anguish that oppress'd me, could I have conceal'd it from your Observation, and been capable of a Resolution

only

only to see you in publick. How dearly did it cost me to avoid your Presence; and what Confessions should I not have made you, had I resign'd myself to the natural Propensity of my Soul! How have your Tears caused my Eyes to flow; and how desirous was I to ease you of the Share of Anguish you sustain'd! Did I assure you in my Letters, that I ceas'd to love you; and could you possibly credit such a Declaration? Could Indifference be well express'd by the Passion that consum'd me? Should I have writ to you at all, if I had not been as much interested in your Affection as ever. But if you misapprehended my Letters, did not my Eyes rectify your Mistake? They, indeed, were the faithful Expositors of my Heart, and Love was for-ever legible in all their Glances. Your Sighs were always succeeded by mine, and the Torments I sustain'd, were more agonizing than yours, since I durst not acquaint you with my Alarms. I was jealous, even to Madness, and imagin'd your Eyes never disclosed the least Indifference to the rest of my Sex. You seem'd to be inspir'd with Tenderness for every Object but myself; but whatever Resentment that Imagination might infuse into my Soul, the moment I recall'd you to my Remembrance, I forgot each Subject of Complaint you had ever given me, and my
Memory

Memory had no Traces that were pleasing, except those that prevented me from banishing your Idea. My Eyes were rivited to your Picture, and in vain did I endeavour to call it the Image of a perfidious Creature. I only beheld those Features which all my Resentment could never erase from my Soul. Barbarian as you are! why is your Heart unaffected with the Tenderness that perpetually softens mine! You can declare you love me, in all the Rapture of Language; but why should your Imagination assume the Province of your Heart! How do you injure me, if you utter what you never experience; and yet how could you so well represent those Emotions, did they affect you but faintly! As I am now satisfied with your Sentiments, be it your Care to perpetuate that Impression. Resolve to be mine, as entirely as I determine to be yours. Live to give me all those Proofs of your Passion, which I have a Right to demand, and receive them reciprocally from me. Let our Union be eternal; and may we forget, amidst our Transports, that any Accident can have Power to effect our Separation. Why, in some sequestred Part of the Universe, sweetly contented with ourselves, remote from every Care, and utterly unknown to the rest of the Creation; can we not behold our Days renewing for no other End,

End, than to present us with the Pleasures that flow from a warm and delicate Passion! As we should then be sure to pass the succeeding Day in Love, we should the less regret that, whose Portion of Hours was expired. The agreeable Remembrance of the past, would only animate us to improve the future; and, amidst the Charms of a Passion for-ever new, our after-Periods of Time would only present us with the Certainty of our mutual Love. Were I alone to converse with you, in some serene and blissful Solitude, I should no longer be apprehensive of beholding you seduced from my Ardours; and as they would be always increasing, they would render you incapable of entertaining an Inclination to forsake me. But since I am not to expect so compleat a Felicity, endeavour, at least, to conduct yourself in such a manner, that amidst the Tumult of the World, you may only be sensible of Solitude, when you are absent from me; and that all the Objects around you may increase your Wishes for a Reunion with that from which you are then divided. And when you attract the Glances of all the Fair, be only solicitous to distinguish mine, and believe me to be alone worthy of your Preference, when-ever you are tempted to Inconstancy. Your utmost Profusion of Love can never repay me, too amply, for
the

the Sufferings you have caused me to sustain; and I should die with Despair, were I to see you devote that Tendernefs to another, which ought to be my peculiar Claim. Could you possibly believe that I lov'd the Prince * * * ? And tho' your Conduct had extinguished my Passion for you, are you so little acquainted with my Disposition, as to believe me capable of a new Commerce with any of your Sex; or that I could possibly desire a Continuance of my Dishonour? I then should justify your Inconstancy and Contempt, too well. You know, by Experience, that my Favours are not easily accorded: You are sensible there were certain Moments wherein my Loss of you would have been insupportable, but that I hoped it would reconcile me to my Duty, and teach me, by a better Conduct, to discontinue the Reproaches I made myself, and which, perhaps, I suffer'd from all the World. You never presumed to solicit my Sacrifice of this Rival to your Repose; and how happy should I be, would you prove so just to me, as to believe any Request of that nature would have been unnecessary! But you shall never see him, for the future, in my Apartment; and would to Heaven, he had been Master of more Merit, that your Triumph might have been as glorious as I could wish. Adieu; I begin to perceive

ceive
and t
my P
since
you,
peating
day;
give
havin
rienc
Trou

Y
that
Hust
Aun
be g
Day
this
ple
mus
ple
selv

rec
baa
my
sen

ceive my Letter has a very frightful Length, and that I have not been very punctual to my Promise : But it has been such an Age since I gave you any Assurance that I lov'd you, that I can easily pardon myself, for repeating that Expression a little too often to-day ; and if you should not likewise forgive me, I can only reproach myself for not having express'd the half of what I experience. I shall no longer give myself the Trouble to abridge your Visits. Adieu.

You will hardly guess at the Misfortune that has happen'd to me. The Marquis my Husband has just now inform'd me, that my Aunt is very much indispos'd, and I must be gone this Moment, to pass the whole Day with her. I should be inconsolable at this Accident, if I did not hope to have ample Amends to-morrow, for the Pleasure I must lose this Day. Can there be any People in the World more unfortunate than ourselves ?

B I L L E T.

I was preparing to write to you, when I received your Letter ; and tho' I thought I had a number of things to tell you, yet I find myself at a loss for any Particulars at present. I could not imagine it would be so difficult

*ficult for me to answer your Letter ; however, I am very sensible that I desire to see you : But don't you think my Closet too solitary a Place for a Visit ? Since I have remov'd my Books from it, we have no Excuse for being there ; and since—Good God, what a number of perplexing Circumstances am I creating myself ! Of what Consequence is my Closet to you ? I had an Inclination to attend Lady *** into the Country, but was unable to fix that Resolution without your Consent ; Come and free me then from my Uncertainty.*

L E T T E R LXVI.

SINCE you have retir'd into the Country, several extraordinary Particulars have happen'd in Town. Lady *** is become a Devotee, and T*** is grown a mere Libertine ; she has quitted her Lover, and he his Benefice ; but 'tis thought they, each of them, will repent of their Proceeding. Count ***, tho' as disagreeable as ever, is extremely fortunate with my Sex, and the serious prude Lady *** begins to amuse herself with amorous Inclinations. The insipid Marchioness is altogether as censorious as ever : She is eternally at play, and preserves her Relish for lively *Champaign* : She likewise continues to be extremely fond of her

her flushing Complexion, her ridiculous Shape, her eternal Prattle, her Vanity, her Vapours, her Rage, and her old Lovers: In short, she is a most immutable Lady. Inconstancy reigns to a prodigious degree at *Paris*, and is grown an epidemic Distemper. Heaven preserve us from its Effects! Amours were never of so short a Continuance as now, whether it be that Favours are refus'd with too much Severity, or granted with too little Hesitation, I am uncertain; but the whole Affair is commonly finish'd in fifteen Days. *D**** was yesterday in the good Grace of Lady ***; but she has entirely discarded him to-day; and he, in revenge, has devoted himself to the old Countess, whose other Gallant has forsaken her; but the two good Ladies are not destitute of Lovers. I was yesterday with ***, and you had Reason to say we were treated a little censoriously in that Place. The charitable *N**** has inform'd me of all the Particulars; but why should we be chagrin'd? Do you imagine that, in what manner soever we live, it will be possible for us to escape Detraction? What will then become of those gay Ladies, who are obliged to withdraw from the Gallant World, to make themselves Devotees out of mere Necessity; and who are criminal from their Constitution, and censorious by Choice? A certain Lady

can have a thousand Lovers, and be less dishonour'd by their Number, than her Choice; and will yet think it unpardonable in me, to have only one. Old Lady *** is implacable against us; but of all our censorious Enemies, I regard her the least. I am sure she will sometimes talk so much like a Prude, that she is perfectly unintelligible; and it might justly be said of her, if one pleas'd, that a certain sprightly Marquis, who constantly visits her, and is for ever publishing the Goodness of the adorable *Climene*, is more obliged to her Conduct, for the Particulars, than to his own Imagination. She may detract from my Charms, without ceasing; but I shall never believe myself disagreeable, till you cease to love me. Little D*** has been extremely pert; but can you prevail upon yourself to chastise him? His Paint, his effeminate Voice, and his ridiculous Airs, render him the Jest of *Paris*. Let him live therefore, and we shall be sufficiently aveng'd. Young Lady *** begins to appear more sparkling, and less formidable than ever: She has improv'd by the Absence of her Lovers, and perhaps is the only Person of her Sex, who can preserve so many Charms, amidst such a Variety of Pangs. But her Gallants are now returning in Crowds: Those whom she has formerly treated with Disdain, remember

ber it no longer, and others are not at all apprehensive of her Rigours. Lady D*** who has never experienc'd such Fortune, is persuaded its Continuance will be short, and that amidst the Number of her Conquests, she will have some Losses to sustain. Lady S***, and the old Marquis of***, whose Amours were only in Imagination, have lately conceived a real Passion for each other, which surprizes all who know 'em. Her Ladyship is a Prude, but extremely tender; and the Marquis is amorous, but in the old Fashion. She is fond of the modern Taste; but his Lordship is devoted to the other, because it proves so commodious to decay'd Lovers. You would be infinitely diverted, were you to hear the melting Conversation of these little Persons; and indeed it is quite hideous. Ever since the Lady has been so generous as to admit the Marquis into her Service, all the Discourse at her House turns upon the Delicacy of Love. His Lordship daily sends her his Remarks on each Book in *Astrea*, and moderates the Lady's Self-sufficiency by his learned Speeches. She vows that she never saw Love made in such a manner as it is in these Times, and is offended with the young People at Court, who introduc'd it. The Marquis, however, finds it necessary to be thought a fortunate Man with our Sex; and

notwithstanding all his Discretion, he never visits Lady *** without looking as mysteriously as if he had some real Affair to transact with her. She assumes an Air of perfect Satisfaction, and believes it will be favourable to her Reputation. It is reported, however, that she would be more dissatisfied with an Amour of this nature, than she really seems, were it not for the young Lover she keeps about her. He is a mere Child, but extremely complaisant, and he fills up those Spaces of Time which are not devoted to the Marquis. Mercy upon me! I have furnish'd you with Detraction enough, or I am much deceived! But I am piqued, and could proceed for ever. I believe I could even rail at you. Good Morrow.

B I L L E T.

You are entirely irregular in all your Conduct. I yesterday expected you at seven, but was not favour'd with your Company till nine; and you was so provoking as to think this a Circumstance of no great Importance, in an Assignment. You oblig'd me this Morning to wake from a charming Slumber, to read a Letter which was not worth the least Particular of my Dream. Be inform'd, once for all, that one never trusts another to wake the Person one loves, when that Office can be perform'd

perform'd by one's self; and you had no Expedient, but this, to prevent my regretting the agreeable Dream you interrupted. I suppose you will ask me what this agreeable Dream could be? I fancied myself in a most delightful Garden, and, if I am not mistaken, I was Flora herself. Zephyrus did not much resemble you, and yet I thought him the most amiable Deity I had ever seen. He had committed some little Offence, and intreated me to pardon him; and as you have accustom'd me to these Condescensions, I comply'd without the least Hesitation, and he was preparing to thank me, when your Letter disconcerted the Flow of his Gratitude. I must confess, I was not much offended at this Interruption: And tho' you may be unworthy of the Favour, I can't help acquainting you, that you have my Permission to begin and end my Dreams. Adieu; you shall be inform'd when I am dispos'd for my next Slumber.

B I L L E T.

I can no longer pardon your Negligence, and you are not to imagine that my Apprehensions are trivial. The Conduct of the Marquis my Husband, his frequent Continuance at V***, the Conjuncture that makes it necessary for him to be advanc'd to the Place that is now vacant; the secret Preparations

he has been making this Month; his Rank, his Fortune, and his Attention to Things he never thought of before, are so many Inquietudes to my Soul. I have imparted my Fears to St. Far ***, who finds 'em just, and you alone are incredulous. I foresee such Misfortunes as make me tremble, and even those that are more fatal present themselves to my View, since you will not condescend to share my Disquiet. Continue then where you are at present; you will soon hear of my Departure, which will be render'd less disagreeable by your Indifference. But if my Apprehensions should really happen to be ill founded, is not my Intimation of them sufficient to make you sympathise in my Affliction? You would dread the Event that threatens me, as much as myself, had Love taught you to share my Torments. So much Security is too evident an Indication of Coldness; and, if we must be separated, no Tears will flow, but mine. However, you shall not enjoy the Satisfaction of beholding them; for you would be so inhuman as to triumph in my Sorrows; and I had rather suffer Death, than afford your Vanity that Gratification. But why do you continue at such a Distance from me? I am sensible of your Aversion to Business, and am persuaded you would have return'd, e'er now, were you not detain'd by some new Pleasures. But however that may be, don't imagine that

I so
sure
calm
exce
Ten
grat

C
cert
my
Bo
plo
par
as a
hav
I a
can
Dr
onl
sen
to
alw
wh
yo
rie
yo
dic

I solicit you to leave the Country. Be assured likewise, that my Affliction is not to be calm'd by a Letter: Your Presence alone can excuse you, and cause me to acknowledge the Tenderness I yet experience for you, as ungrateful as you would willingly appear.

L E T T E R L X V.

OUR cruel Presages are at last accomplish'd! Our Unhappiness is but too certain, and the Ambition of the Marquis, my Husband, has plung'd a Dagger into my Bosom. He has, at last, obtain'd the Employment for which he solicited, and is preparing to carry me into a Country, which, as amiable as it may be thought, will always have the Aspect of a savage Land to me. I am now expos'd to all the Torments that can be created by a fatal Passion. The Dread of your Inconstancy was once my only Calamity; but I am not certain at present, whether it would not be less afflictive to me, to find you false, provided I could always see you, than to lose you for ever, when your Constancy is untainted. Are you truly sensible of the Horror I experience in this Situation? I love you, beyond the Power of Conception; — But, did I only say, love! Ah! how inexpressive
of

of my Tenderness for you, is that faint Syl-
lable! And must I then quit you for ever!
Alas! you likewise love me, and that
Thought compleats my Despair! How
can we possibly live, when we are thus to
be separated from each other! We have
thought a Moment's Absence insupportable,
and were then destitute of all Delight. But
I must now leave you for ever! For ever!—
O gracious Heaven! can I write that Ex-
pression, and continue to live! Have we
really merited the Calamities we sustain!
Am I then fated to trouble the dear Repose
of your Life! I, who would sacrifice my
own with Transport, to render you happy!
But alas! our Doom is sign'd! we are now
to meet no more; since Heaven has de-
creed that our Separation shall be eternal!
Could we possibly believe that the Adieus
we so lately exchanged, should be our last!
The Anguish of this Idea sinks me to De-
spair! Must we then be parted for ever,
and shall we be perpetually lamenting our
Absence, without one flattering Hope of Re-
union! Each of my future Days, then, will
afflict me with a new Portion of Woe; and
I shall only live in a languishing Sollicitude
for Death. I shall see those Days of Hor-
ror roll slowly away, without enjoying one
Moment of your charming Presence; for
alas! my weeping Eyes must behold you

no more ! Had my Misfortunes afforded me but one dear Probability of seeing you hereafter, that precious Moment, which would always be presented to my Imagination, with the delightful Hope of beholding you faithful, would soften the Severity of my Tortures. Can so exquisite a Pleasure be purchas'd with too many Tears ? But I am not allow'd to entertain that pleasing Expectation, and the Continuance of my Unhappiness is the only Prospect that rises before me. As the Duties of your Station will oblige you to reside in *France*, I can only be the Object of your Compassion, and you may possibly not afford me even that, for any Length of Time. Alas ! I shall no sooner arrive at the Place to which I am banish'd, than my Image will be effaced from your Heart ; our mutual Love will then appear to you like a Dream, whose Remembrance will afford you no Satisfaction ! But, can you indeed consent to render me so wretched ? Can you possibly forget with what Tendernefs I lov'd you, and how infinitely dear to my Soul you still continue ? Pity me some Moments at least, and let me intreat you to remember, that Love created all the Calamities of my Life, and will soon lay me in the Grave. Yes, my dearest Lord ! I shall not long survive my Separation from you, for I have no
Forti-

Fortitude to support me in such a threaten-
 Scene of Woe. Adieu; I fear I shall
 prejudice your Affairs, should I desire you
 to hasten your Return; but you are sensible
 how much I need your Presence at this
 time. I behold the killing Preparations for
 our Departure; and perhaps when eight
 Days are over, I shall never be permitted
 to see you more. They are even so in-
 human as not to allow me to weep; and
 while I am dying with Anguish, I am ob-
 lig'd to dissemble a serene Aspect to those
 who congratulate me on the new Dignity
 that deprives me of your Presence for ever.
 Adieu; let me see you, however, that I
 may, at least, mourn, with you, over the
 Misfortunes that await me. I am sensible
 of the Tortures I am preparing for my
 Soul, by desiring to see you; but I should
 think myself happy, to expire in your
 Arms!

L E T T E R LXVI.

NO, my dearest Lord; I can never
 consent that you should follow me to
 the Land of my Banishment. It would be
 impossible for you to behold me in my
 present Condition, without dying with An-
 guish, and mine would be augmented by
 your

your Presence. My Soul likewise presages that I shall never see you again. In vain did you flatter me with approaching Scenes of Bliss ; for I am certain there are none in reserve for me. These six Months have I sustain'd a languishing Indisposition, and am sensible it will soon be render'd mortal by my Sorrows. This Idea alone could make my Remains of Life supportable ; for why should I wish to continue in this World ! I am overwhelm'd with a cruel Weight of Woe, and can entertain no Hopes of Relief, since I am fated to love you to the last Moment of my Life, and am convinc'd that we shall no more be revisited by those happy Days we pass'd in mutual Vows of an eternal Passion. They are now for ever lost to us, and the Remembrance of the Joys they afforded, will only contribute to our Despair. How can I possibly support an endless Absence ! I am perpetually counting the Moments I pass without you. But, could I have the Satisfaction to be assur'd of your Happiness ; could you really be insensible of our Separation, and would consent to lose me without Reluctance—Alas ! I should then die with Despair ! I am unacquainted with my own Inclinations : I even wish you would cease to love me ; I cannot think of your Torments without Distraction ; and yet nothing renders my Sorrow supportable,

able, but the Assurance that you continue to share it. I recollect the Condition in which I beheld you, when we were oblig'd to suppress our Tears at the cruel Adieus we exchang'd, when the Eyes of those, who observ'd our Actions, compell'd us to constrain them, and when the dying Languish of my Soul render'd me incapable of assuring you that I would never cease to love you. But let me intreat you to preserve yourself, for the sake of all that's dearest to your Thoughts! And should I be that dearest All, how infinite would my Happiness then prove! Be careful of your Welfare, I implore you! Live in perpetual Felicity, but forbear to banish me from your Remembrance. Let my Idea be sometimes presented to your Imagination, you will soon receive the Tidings of my Death; for I should be too miserable, were I long to linger out so wretched a Life. I yesterday thought myself expiring, when I approach'd the Mansion that is honour'd with your Name. We happen'd to stop there, and I alighted out of the Coach: Ah! how should I have been delighted to have seen you in that charming Place! We visited the Apartments, and I was shewn that where you usually reside: Your Picture was the first Object that met my Eyes, and I fainted the moment I beheld it. My Disorder con-

tinued

tinued so long, that I was oblig'd to desire them not to proceed in our Journey. I pass'd the Night in your Bed: O that fatal, melancholy Night! No Imagination is able to conceive the Anguish it gave me. The next Morning I took a View of your Park, and thought, with a Sigh, that you would one day return to that Solitude, to lament my Absence; and that you sometimes would review, with Pleasure, those Places where I left you many an Evidence of my Love and Sorrows. What a Flow of Tears did I shed over your Picture! I thought myself in the last Moments of Death, when I kiss'd it. Perhaps my Tomb may recall me to your Memory! But why do I entertain you with these melancholy Imaginations! Can I be so barbarous as to increase your Despair! I am sure you love me, and I tremble for you, if your Condition has any Similitude to mine. I, at last, quitted that charming Retreat, where you must continue in my Absence. There did your Picture present me with the last View of your enchanting Form that I shall ever obtain. O Heavens! you will there seek for me in vain! Our ardent Wishes will have no Power to unite us: But why should I consent to be the Cause of your Unhappiness! Ah! when shall I be deliver'd from the Anguish

of that Thought! Fatal Days! will you never come to your final Period! This is what I passionately desire, and should be delighted to die this Moment. You have intreated me to wait for happier Times; but do you imagine my Soul can rise above the Woes that assault it? I am sensible that I sink beneath their Weight, and I resign myself to my Doom, without a Murmur. Adieu, my dearest Count; you occasion all the Calamities of my Life: Heaven grant that I may not be the Cause of yours! Devote some few Moments to the Remembrance of an unfortunate Creature, who lives for you alone. Once more Adieu; and O that it may not prove the last! Alas! I have lost you for ever, and should esteem Death my greatest Felicity.

L E T T E R LXVII.

THREE Hours have I vainly linger'd out, in expectation of a Letter from you: My Fears are too justly founded, and you love me no more. I am now destitute of every Enjoyment. I had no Resource, but the Hope of living in your Remembrance.—Ah! why was I willing to be so credulous! I deceiv'd myself, when
I

I imagin'd my Misfortunes would increafe your Passion. Ungrateful Man ! can you then abandon me in this inhuman manner, when you are sensible I am this moment dying for you ! You will not long be disquieted by me, and I am astonish'd that I can yet desire to be the Object of your tender Affection. What are the Hopes I would entertain ? In the unhappy Situation to which I am now reduc'd, the Certainty of your Passion would add to my Calamities. I am perswaded I shall see you no more ; why then do I cherish those Desires that can only torment me ! Have you an Inclination to teach me to forget you ? Restore me then to myself ; restore me, if possible, to my lost Repose. *Barbarian* as you are ! is it not enough that your Absence overwhelms me with Despair ; but must you render me still more miserable, by convincing me that I have lost you for ever ! Are you then resolv'd to abandon me ! Ah ! if you still retain any slight Remembrance of me, let me intreat you to cast your Eyes on my wretched Condition. Death would now be the least of my Calamities : But, O merciful Heaven ! what a Scene of Terror does it daily present to my View ! How does it reproach me with all my Crimes ! With what a dreadful Fatality does it recall your Idea

to my Soul ! You are incapable of conceiving the Tortures I sustain, and they are not to be describ'd by the utmost Power of Language ! Tho' you should still continue to love me, and were as much rack'd at our Absence, as myself, your Sorrows would have those Mitigations which I must never expect. 'Tis true, you have lost me for ever, but you can lament that Loss without the least Constraint. No Person interrupts your Sorrows, and you are not requir'd to unfold the Cause of your Tears. No one compels you to dissemble a Tenderness to an Object you cannot love. You offer me all your Thoughts, and are at liberty to pour out the Anguish of your Soul, without Reserve. You are not fated to any Subjection, and may have the Satisfaction of devoting all your Hours to Grief. But, O how unfortunate am I ! Have I once enjoy'd a Moment's Tranquillity these six Days past ! Ah ! why am I not sequester'd from the rest of the World ! My Sighs would, at least, be allow'd me in Solitude, and I should then be so happy as to enjoy your amiable Idea without Interruption. But, is it possible that you should exhort me to forget you ? Tho' this Counsel should be only suggested by your Generosity, and that, in compassion to my Misfortunes, you should determine to

end

end them, by resolving to be no more be-
 lov'd, what can you render me in the room
 of my Sorrows? Perhaps you will tell me,
 that I ought to forget you : But what would
 be the Consequence, were I capable of obey-
 ing you? You! who are ever present to my
 Thoughts, as well in the Tumult of the
 World, as in the Calm of Solitude, and the
 Silence of Night. You! who are the sole
 Cause of all my Woes: You! whose Indif-
 ference could never rend you from my Heart.
 The more you wound it, the stronger is it
 riveted to your dear Image. O Remem-
 brance too painful, of those Moments that
 glided away in lovely Raptures! Fatal,
 pleasing Moments, that are now lost for ever!
 Why are you still presented to my Memo-
 ry! Vainly do I endeavour to banish 'em;
 they pursue me through all my Retreats. If
 Slumber at any time steals upon my Sor-
 rows, and closes my Eyes for a few Mo-
 ments, don't imagine it affords me the least
 Repose. My Calamities then rise before me
 in a stronger Glare; your Image dwells upon
 my Senses, I behold you languishing with
 Love; you sympathize in all my Anguish;
 I have the Pleasure to intermix my Tears
 with yours; I hear the melting Musick of
 your Voice, and all my sad Ideas are then
 brighten'd into Extacies too great to be de-

scrib'd: I seem to wander with you, in those delicious verdant Scenes, where we once resign'd ourselves to the Ardours of our mutual Passion, and gave a Loose to all the Softness that Love could inspire. I then fancy that I am folded in your Arms ; I listen to the gentle Breathing of your Sighs ; I indulge you with a Profusion of the warmest Caresses ; my 'Transports are kindled by yours ; I am lost in extatic Bliss ; I faint ; I die ; — and then the dear Illusion is over : But the Torment it creates me, makes me believe the whole Scene a Reality. I search for you all around ; I call you with the Voice of Love, and would willingly imagine you are near me. My Desires afflict me with painful Inquietudes ; my Tears trickle a-new ; and I pass the remainder of the Night in those cruel Imaginations, which the Day has no Power to dissipate. I only view the rising Dawn, to detest it, and my pleasing Hope that you continue to love me, is my only Consolation. One Letter from you, calms all the Anguish I have sustain'd, and I read it without ceasing. Why then do you refuse me this reviving Solace ! Do you imagine, that something is still wanting to compleat my Misery ; and must I receive it from your dear Hand alone ? To whom shall I have Recourse, in this my destitute

destitute Condition ? Should you resolve to forsake me; who will aid me to support the Remains of a languishing Life ? Perhaps some new Passion has for ever eras'd me from your Remembrance ; be so generous then as to let me continue ignorant of your Infidelity. Endeavour to deceive me, in mere Compassion, that, if possible, I may never know to what degree you have caused me to be wretched. Let me breathe my Last, without complaining of your Barbarity. You desire me, in your Letter, to forget you, and you may possibly hope that my Obedience will render your Ingratitude less visible. Perhaps I injure you by that Suspicion, and my Absence may probably furnish you with new Motives to love me with a constant Passion. But you neglect to visit me, and no longer revive me with your Letters. Adieu ! If I really continue to be dear to you, remember the Tenderness you owe me ; but if you consider me with Indifference, think how much I need your Consolation and Pity.

LET.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

O Heavens! what fatal Tidings have you sent me in your Letter! Is it possible, that after all the Unhappiness I have already experienc'd, there should still be more Calamities for me to sustain! Can it then be true, that Lady ***, that generous, constant Friend, is dead! You have then beheld her in the Condition that will soon be mine, and your Sorrows, e'er long, may have some Affinity to those of the desolate *St. Far* ***. How do I tremble at this dismal Thought! Not that I am intimidated at the mere Approach of Death; but, O righteous Heaven! what Scenes of Guilt and Horror; what melancholy Subjects for Repentance rise before me! I shall soon be join'd to my dear departed Friend: But alas! how little shall I resemble her in the Circumstances of my Death! She had no Convictions of Guilt to wound her Soul, and her last Moments were not discompos'd by those cruel Reflections that will embitter mine. When she beheld herself on the Point of being sever'd from her dearest Object, she was under no Necessity to constrain her Sorrow. Her Tears were blended with Innocence; but, what will be my wretched

wretched State, since I ought to reproach myself for those Sighs which even my Calamities extort from my Breast! I am constantly haunted by the most criminal Ideas, and find it impossible to chase them from my Remembrance. My eternal Separation from you; the declining State of my Health; the near Prospect of my Death; the Conflicts of Remorse, that perpetually rend my Soul; my Passion, which neither a wasting Constitution, nor a trembling Soul can diminish, and which is even cherish'd by its own Torments; the Woes that afflict me at present, and my Apprehensions of those to which I may be fated hereafter; my Fears to recollect my past Conduct; my burning Impatience for your Return, and my Despair of ever beholding you more; these are the Entertainments in which I pass my forlorn Days. I am fetter'd by cruel Decorums, and, of all my Misfortunes, can only bewail the untimely Death of my Friend, and with which Lord * * * seems to be as much affected as myself. His Inflexibility in tormenting me with his hateful Passion, and the sympathising Tears he devotes to my Grief, entirely compleat my Desperation. I should rejoice to be the Object of his Aversion, and wish he would for ever detest me, as much as I detest myself. My Soul is
chill'd,

chill'd, when-ever I behold him. In vain do I sometimes endeavour to excuse my own Frailties, by recollecting the Disorders of Soul he so often discovers : I am sensible they can never justify mine, and I resign myself to all the Horror with which my Crimes inspire me. I am sometimes inclin'd to flatter myself, that my Passion has been succeeded by Repentance ; but alas ! I find it impossible to forget you. And could I say, forget you ! you reign triumphant, amidst the severest Reflections that rack my Heart. I easily persuade myself, that you regret my Absence, and that dear Belief teaches me to submit to Death without a Murmur. But, may I not be privileg'd to behold you once more ? Ah ! if you still continued to love me, could I need to ask you that Question ! Are you not sufficiently sensible, that the Sight of you would sooth my Torments, or, at least, would cause me to die with less Reluctance ? But alas ! what would your Entertainment be in this Place ! Why should I be desirous to pierce your Soul ! What a fatal Spectacle should I present to your View ! You could only know me by my Passion, and I should be accessary to the Encrease of my tormenting Remorse. Adieu : Do not forget me, my Lord, but permit me to live in your Heart.

This

This
noth
and,
shou
sink
I re
this
able
othe
you
Mo
hav
sup
qua
you
fio

Y
an
of
fil
p
er
D
y
u

This is a Consolation you owe me, since nothing could ever rend you from my Soul; and, if I had not lov'd you to Idolatry, I should not have sustain'd the Calamities that sink me to the Grave. But, do not believe I reproach you for what I have suffer'd; this may possibly be the last time I shall be able to write to you; but if Heaven has not otherwise ordain'd, I will continue to assure you that I will be yours alone, to the last Moment of my Life. Adieu: Let *St. Far**** have the Letter I have inclos'd; aid him to support his Despair, but let him not be acquainted with my Condition. Alas! you yourself may possibly have too much occasion for the Relief you offer him.

L E T T E R L X I X .

YOU are not sensible, while you are so intent on your Journey to this Place, and are affording me such endearing Proofs of your Tenderness; I say, you are not sensible, that with all the Expedition you can possibly make, you will only arrive time enough to see me breathe my last. Is not Death sufficiently doleful in itself; but would you add to the Horrors of mine, by your unavailing Presence! Such a Sight will be
too

too fatal for you to support ; for you cannot behold me in my deplorable Condition, without dying yourself. Fly then from an Object that would add new Anguish to your Despair, and leave me alone to sustain the Severity of my last Pangs. We must now indeed be parted for ever ! No more Hopes are in reserve for us, and we shall never behold each other again. Receive this Stroke of Fate with Fortitude ; and, since our Calamities are not to be eluded, submit to them with the Resignation I have acquir'd. Ever since I have been sever'd from you, what could I wish for more, than to finish the remainder of a Life that was doom'd to such Despair as knew no Intermission ! My Days have, at last, attain'd their final Period ; and as you sincerely love me, and can judge, by your own Experience, of the insupportable Woes I sustain, instead of wishing me to live, congratulate me on a Death that releases me from Tortures a thousand times more dreadful than all its Terrors. Had I been permitted to see you once more, might I not have beheld you inconstant ? and would that racking Idea have comforted with my expiring State ? Ah ! what are the present Dispositions of my Soul ! Great God ! wilt thou then permit Death to surprize me in the unprepar'd Bloom of Life !

Life! How do I still reflect, with Pleasure, on those Moments that ought to shake my Soul with Horror! What a fatal Confusion of Thoughts crowds upon me! Ah why, my dearest Lord, can I only think on you, when there are so many awful Subjects that should engage my Attention! In a few Moments, I shall be yours no more; the Object you have lov'd with so much Tenderness, and who consecrated all her Vows to you alone, till she at last became the Victim to her own Passion; that Object is now preparing to expiate her Crimes and Frailties by Death. O the dreadful Image! To what State shall I now be consign'd! What Compunctions of Soul do I experience! Great God! shall they be all unavailing! Adieu; let me intreat you to write to me no more. Live, my beloved Lord, and, if it be possible, live happy. My Fortitude begins to forsake me. Fatal, cruel Moments! Adieu. Forget me for ever, if it be necessary to your Repose. Alas! Death itself is less painful to me than that Request!

L E T T E R LXX.

I Must now flatter myself no more with Life : The fatal Moment approaches, and I must leave you for ever ; for Death has begun his Work ! It is no longer the frail Person enslav'd by a fatal Passion, who writes to you now. It is an unfortunate Creature, who repents of all her Crimes ; who reviews them with Horror ; who is sensible of all their Weight, and who yet is unable to refuse you new Proofs of her Tenderneſs. Sad Remains of my Frailty, which, amidſt the Terrors and Apprehenſions of Death, ſtill preſent you to my Imagination ! I have burnt your Letters, and began, by that Sacrifice, to diſengage myſelf from Life. I have depoſited your Picture in faithful Hands ; and would to Heaven that I had likewiſe parted with all my Remembrance of the Original ! What ſweet Tranquillity would then compoſe my Soul ! With how much Calmneſs could I reſign my Life, had all its Moments been leſs devoted to you ! I am an Object of Horror to myſelf ; and how infinitely wretched ſhall I be, if I am not an Object of Compaſſion ! How joyfully could I ſupport my preſent Woes, did not the Proſpect of greater preſent itſelf
to

to my View! And, must Death close my Eyes for ever! What Pangs have I yet to sustain, before this dreadful Scene be over! How little should I regret the Loss of Life, would its Period likewise end my Anguish! But, O great God, what Fate am I yet to experience! And what, my dearest Count, will become of you! I behold, in an Hereafter which I am not permit to enjoy here, those Agonies of yours, that now render me completely wretched. I see your Tears; I hear the killing Language of your Sorrows, and sympathise in all your Despair. Ah fatal Idea! My Tears have already flow'd before yours, and I can no longer support my Anguish. Adieu. May your Days be more fortunate than mine have prov'd! And oh, may all my Vows for your Welfare be heard! Adieu; I must lose you for ever! Think of me sometimes, at least, but cease to remember my Frailties. Assure *St. Far**** that I die his faithful Friend. Tender him your Assistance, and may he be so generous as not to forsake you in your Sorrows. Did he but know how much I have sympathis'd with him in his Despair! Let me intreat both you and him to continue constant Friends. My Tears, and the Pangs of Death, render me incapable of writing more. Pity me, I beseech you; but be careful of

(304)

your own Welfare! Perhaps I shall be no more, when you receive this Letter. Adieu. I must endeavour to improve my few remaining Moments. I am now come to the last Period of my Days, and am preparing to end them with Fortitude. Adieu! Adieu! Adieu! for ever!

The End of the Second and Last Part.



D
L
E
S
!

.

7